EAST BAY EXPRESS

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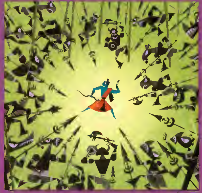


SHARP EDGES, EPIC STORY

Pixar animator Sanjay Patel brings his edgy sensibility to ancient Hindu myth. By Rachel Swan

BODY & SOUL — 30

FEATURE — 15

THE CANCER IN THE OAKLAND MAYOR'S RACE

There's evidence that Don Perata is attempting to evade Oakland's campaign contribution limits by using a statewide fund to fight cancer

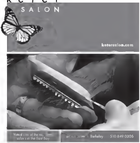
By Robert Gammon

At first glance, Don Perata's sponsorship of a statewide measure that would raise funds for cancer research seems perfectly understandable. After all, the former leader of the California Senate has been battling prostate cancer since May of last year. But in recent months, there have been growing indications that Perata's involvement in the proposed ballot initiative involves a motive beyond finding a cure for cancer — namely, to help him become the next mayor of Oakland. In fact, there is evidence that Perata may be attempting to use the cancer-research initiative to skirt state and local campaign finance laws in ways that could give him an unfair advantage over his mayoral opponents. *Story Inside*

MUSIC — 44

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

Sound Tribe Sector 9 at the Fox Theater



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On the Cover *Ramayana: Divine Loophole.* Illustration by Sanjay Patel

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— trim   << fold

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Win with Berkeley, Local & Fair
Object of Game:

Object of Game

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2. **Complete** the requirements in each shopping category.
3. **Add** Berkeley businesses each time you buy Fair Trade at a location not yet listed!
4. **Celebrate** locally: turn in your completed BERKE-OPO-LEY card for 10% off at Global Exchange AND your Fair Trade Town Membership (for future fair & local perks)

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○ Andronico's: all 4 business
○ Ashby Marketplace: 2842 Ashby
○ Berkeley Bowl: both locations
○ Natural Grocery: 1336 Gilman
○ Monterey Market: 1550 Hopkins
○ Whole Foods Market: 3000 Telegraph
○ __________
○ __________

Restaurants – minimum 2, this category

○ Bread Workshop: 1396 University
○ Bobby G's Pizzeria: 2072 University
○ Gather: 2200 Oxford
○ Saul's Restaurant & Deli: 1475 Shattuck
○ Yogurt Harmony: 2219 Shattuck
○ __________
○ __________

Record BERKE-OPO-LEY purchases HERE.

Cafes – minimum 3, this category

○ Addison Annex Café: 2137 Addison
○ Au Coquelet Café: 2000 University
○ Bread Garden: 2912 Domingo
○ Cafe Fanny: 1603 San Pablo
○ Cafe Gratitude: 1730 Shattuck
○ Cheeseboard: 1512 Shattuck
○ People's Café: 2018 Shattuck
○ Tomate Cafe: 2265 Fifth
○ Uncommon Grounds: 2813 Seventh
○ Village Grounds: 1797-A Shattuck
○ __________
○ __________

Record BERKE-OPO-LEY purchases HERE.

Stores – minimum 2, this category

○ Avant Card: 2580 Bancroft
○ Castle in the Air: 1805 4th
○ The Craftsman Home: 3048 Claremont
○ Earthly Goods: 1819 San Pablo
○ The Ecology Center: 2530 San Pablo
○ The Gardener: 1836 Fourth
○ Global Exchange: 2840 College
○ Paranmon: 934 the Alameda
○ The Treehouse: 2635 College
○ What the Traveler Saw: 1880 Solano
○ __________
○ __________

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Play
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February 6 – March 31, 2010

Where to Buy List &
Game Instructions Inside...

NEWS & OPINION

EAST BAY EXPRESS
Running a Business With 26 CEOs

LETTERS

How to Raise [illegible]

Pseudo Equity

Great strategies to raise money. Subscriptions and pre-sells are excellent ways. But you can also raise money by asking for specially structured loans. I believe you could structure a loan to be pseudo equity without running afoul of the law. You could structure the loan with very low or totally deferred interest, a very advantageous (to the business owner) payment schedule and also as non-recourse so, like equity, if the business goes out of business, you are not liable for the debt. With this type of loan you would have to offer a way above average interest rate for it to be appealing to investors. But while you should check with your attorney, I do believe this could work without having to register with the SEC.

James Todd

Crowdfunding Option

You mentioned crowdfunding as an option in the article. If you're interested in crowdfunding and crowdsourcing, you should definitely check out IndieGoGo.com. It's a crowdfunding site that has had a lot of successes in the past and recently opened up its platform to support business ventures.

Daniel

[illegible]

Holes, But Still Cheaper

Korea has not had a "universal" system for long, and there are lots of holes in it. The details change fast, but for example MRIs are either not covered or have only been covered as of recently. They weren't when I needed one — had to pay separate for it. Furthermore, a Korean American who has been here since 1980 isn't covered by Korea's universal health care. Neither are the "medical tourists" the Korean government has been encouraging hospitals to court and have visit the country just for medical treatment. None of which matters, the point of the article stands — even if you have to pay for it entirely out of your own pocket, for most procedures it's cheaper to go there. It's a good thing there are so many Korean businesses on Telegraph; seems most of the quotes were gleaned from Korean Americans working along that fair thoroughfare. I'd be surprised if any English language news outlet in the U.S. has covered Korean Americans with the same frequency that EBE has in the past couple months. Good work!

aranchay

No Longer Skeptical

My father hasn't lived in Korea since the '60s and hasn't had insurance since the '80s, although he's on Medicare now. He went to Korea last year for a full check-up, dental work, and maybe some cosmetic surgery. I don't know if he was covered by Korea's universal health care but it cost him under 5k. I was skeptical, not knowing about Korea's quality of medical care, but now I see why he did it.

midlee

[illegible] 1/6

The Wave of the Future

Thank you for this excellent article. Jaylen Mitchell is my grandson and not only is he learning Mandarin, he is excelling in English and math. It is the same with my granddaughter Jayla. They are not losing their culture, they are gaining a worldview. I hope this is the wave of the future.

Alma

Enriching for the Whole Family

Thank you for this article on Shu Ren. My son Romen attends the pre-k class and is one of the three African American students there. Prior to attendance, we worried about his being stereotyped, about his being overwhelmed with the language, and about him losing previous gains with language and math. Many of my mornings were spent watching his interactions with peers and staff from windows to ensure "my baby is okay." What I observed was teachers being patient and consistent when he struggled, kids interacting with him based on his personality, not his skin color, and a child thrilled when he came home and had learned something new he could share with mom and dad. We sent Romen to Shu Ren to build his future but found that it has enriched our whole family's present.

Audra Butler

He Loves School

We have all read the information about children in foreign language programs have tended to demonstrate greater cognitive development, creativity, and divergent thinking than monolingual children. This information was one of many reasons we decided to put our son in an immersion program. We looked at many immersion schools and found that Shu Ren fulfilled our language goal and just as important helped to develop the whole child — an emotionally and physically healthy, civically engaged, responsible and caring young boy. Our son has been at the school since it opened and loves going to school!

Andrew Mellen

[illegible] 1/13

Playing Into Sexism

Erin Gilmore did a fine job exposing the dysfunction of family court here, which is not unique to Alameda County and is happening all over America and beyond. But she does a HUGE disservice to the tens if not hundreds of thousands of mothers who are losing custody of their children to abusive fathers, which dozens of peer-reviewed research studies are overwhelmingly clear on. By quoting only fathers rights organizations spewing about how Dads are being victimized and how Moms are being favored, Gilmore plays right into the deep-seated sexism that the media has repeatedly shown on this issue.

Just in the past three weeks, *20/20*, *Nightline* and *NBC Dateline* have ALL done major stories about Dads losing custody, but when literally thousands of mothers have tried to get their cases exposed by talking with reporters about the very same broken system, the media repeatedly turn a blind eye and claim that they don't get into "he said, she said" squabbles between ex-spouses. Enough of the sexist coverage already! Anyone who thinks that women have an unfair advantage in family court is extremely uninformed and you should be sure to check out the web sites of the Leadership Council on Child Abuse and Interpersonal Violence, Center for Judicial Excellence, California Protective Parents Association, Mothers of Lost Children, Child Abuse Solutions, Inc., Stop Family Violence, Justice for Children, Battered Mothers Custody Conference, California NOW, New York State NOW, Protective Mothers Alliance, and the list goes on.

What Ananas is going through is downright criminal and it deserves to be exposed, yet this story does a real disservice to the thousands of mothers who are losing custody of their precious children each and every day in family court because they are reporting sexual and physical abuse of their kids by their fathers. How hard would it have been for Gilmore to be more balanced in her article by mentioning even ONCE that mothers are being screwed by the system as well, instead of always quoting fathers rights activists? I expect more from the *East Bay Express*. I strongly urge you to give equal coverage to the stories of East Bay moms who are suffering at the hands of unaccountable judges.

Moms Screwed Too

Don't Bash Hendrickson

I practice family law in Alameda County and although this is a sad story, I felt that it was very one-sided. I agree with the point that the legal system is not designed to address custody issues in a way that best supports families, but I do not agree with the bashing of Commissioner Hendrickson. Commissioner Hendrickson is an excellent judicial officer and I am certain that she had good cause for her rulings. Commissioner Hendrickson takes the time to understand the case and the parties. She listens to parties and attorneys. She reads the filed court documents prior to the hearing. She knows the law. I am certain that if this father asked for a statement of decision in his case in a manner that followed proper legal procedure, Commissioner Hendrickson would have provided him with it. Commissioner Hendrickson is a grounded and intelligent person.

Donna Gibbs

A Tragic State

My wife and I are co-directors of a large preventive intervention project sponsored by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention in California. The goal is to help fathers, especially low-income fathers, become more involved and stay more involved with their children. It is tragic that while one arm of the state is attempting to encourage fathers' involvement with their children, another arm of the state is making it as difficult as possible.

Father involvement researcher

Kick Lazy Judges Off

I too have been screwed by the Alameda "family" court system — which is NOT a family court. The judges rotate like lawn furniture, which is part of the problem. I had two custody evaluations and asked only for my LEGAL 50 percent custody. But women and unscrupulous lawyers will throw the "abusive" charge out, and then you are in the dog house FOREVER — trying to prove a negative. It is the one thing you are guilty of without it legally being proven. There is also a totally UNCONSTITUTIONAL law on the CA books that says if one side of a COURT ORDERED custody evaluation does not want that entered into evidence, it will NOT be considered in a custody trial. OK, fathers — and mothers for that matter — who have been screwed by "family" court, it is high time to stand up and DEMAND change. I would love for Erin Gilmore to look into my case. Thanks for the article and I hope something positive comes from it. Oh and by the way these "judges" are supposed to be reconfirmed by election — do NOT vote for them! Any fathers or mothers who have been poorly treated in court should WRITE LETTERS before each election and kick these lazy, bias, incompetent "judges" off the bench.

Spray Tuna Roll

Prostitutes Can Be Good Parents, Too

I do not want to comment on this case in particular because there just isn't enough information contained in the article. However, all parents have rights to be a part of their children's lives. Prostitutes can be perfectly good parents and so can bank robbers. If the state removed every child from areas with gunshots because it is dangerous for kids, then there would be millions more children in foster care. Ideally, in my opinion "family court" should be abolished and replaced with a non-confrontational system where both parents have equal rights regardless of financial, employment, health or any other

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status currently used by the courts to dictate controls. As long as the parent isn't blatantly harming a child any parent deserves joint custody. If there is a perceived problem with one or both parents then there needs to be a timely method to correct the concern. Currently the crawling pace of "family court" allows the plaintiff to maintain custody for years at a time before a resolution is ordered. The children suffer the most under the current dysfunctional system. I know that this current system will never change because there are too many people including attorneys, judges, and mediators making lots of money out of the disarray caused by this adversarial system. I can only dream of a better way I can't change this system. I was personally victimized twice by this system but my children suffered more than I did. Now as adults we can talk about it but what's done is done. Think long and hard before you enter this "system." Settle your problems out of court if you really love your children because all the children get hurt once "family court" gets involved. Good luck.

Jim Frega

What About the Mothers?

This article makes it seem as if mothers always get custody, even when they are extremely unfit. Nothing could be farther from the truth, especially when it concerns mothers trying to protect themselves and their children from abuse. The American Judges Association found that abusive fathers get custody 70 percent of the time when they make an issue of custody in the court, and the mothers who are trying to protect themselves and their children don't get the luxury of "shared parenting" — they are often completely cut out of their children's lives. Another point — fathers' rights activists, including the two quoted in this article, urge for states to adopt "shared parenting" (joint legal and physical custody) as presumptive law in all states, claiming it's fair for fathers and better for children than sole mother custody. This case in this article is yet another example of how "shared parenting" fails. I hope *East Bay Express* will soon publish an article with a similar story about a protective mother who loses custody to an abusive, control-freak father, and then sees all her contact eliminated, but I won't hold my breath. Such articles are very unpopular in this current political climate that favors and exalts fathers, no matter their fitness.

Lara C

A Waste of Money

Both parents should be supported in their ability to be parents. A custody fight is that, a fight and assertion of authority. Since nothing is said about the father being abusive, let him have his role — understanding that he must also support the mother lest she be found abusive/unable to parent. People who utilize the court system, outside of criminal matters, have control issues. Can not we communicate anymore? All this wasted money. Are we wonder why children are such delinquents. Share the love. Quoting Glenn Sacks has to be the biggest joke in this article. In fact, it reduces the story and also pits it as a mother against father thing. This doesn't seem like the real case in this particular story — but people such as Sacks would love to make it this way in order

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to give their drivel a platform. Furthermore, the "issues" that drive typical fathers rights drivel do not serve families of color well because of the complexities they face as a result of the intersection of many " isms.

Formolkie

Why Does the Media Ignore Us?

Why do the media continue to give fathers such coverage? We've got thousands of women going through this, in the domestic violence field we often see batterers get visitation or sole/joint custody — how is this in the "best interest of the child"? We see mothers go to jail rather than turn over custody we see women flee the country because the judge doesn't believe them and recently we heard of a mother that killed her daughters and herself because the judge didn't believe the father sexually abused the child. We have peer-reviewed research, documented cases evidence — all that is needed. Yet ... the media ignores us. Inform yourselves — ABA, Stop Family Violence, The Leadership Council on Child Abuse. Google mothers rights. Do Google Scholar searches on custody issues, gender task force, PAS being used to mask child abuse. The courts are being lead astray by fathers righters — the abusers' lobby

jodo

A Sampling of Barbecue Styles 1/20 Food &

Not So Phat

I'm a real bbq aficionado and I've ferreted out nearly every bbq joint in the Bay Area. I tried Phat Matt's once and would never return. The meat I had was tasteless, the sauce inconsequential and the sides mundane in the extreme.

Miltiades Mandros, Oakland

Roadkill 1/20 News

Don't Kill

There's a problem here. Killing wildlife is illegal!!!! Also that snare trap in the video is cruel! This guy should not be celebrated for killing our native animals !!

galahird

How Would You Feel?

I have always considered roadkill to be an insensitive term that demonstrates the arrogance of drivers and only contributes to the callous attitude people hold toward animals. I think humans should consider how it would feel to be hit by a speeding car and left to suffer and die while no one shows any concern for their condition.

Carl Hoffman, San Francisco

1/27 Endorsements

Not Racist

From a person who was there. Measure A was a reaction to:

A. Ron Cowen's plans for Harbor Bay Isle which initially would have brought in 25,000 people for the density that was proposed. The sentiment was that on our small island with only the tube and the three bridges the town could not handle the impact.

B. Smaller developers who were tearing down Vics and old homes replacing them with unpleasant looking 6 to 20 unit apartments or multi-family places. They were not cheap to rent.

At no time was there any discussion regarding keeping people of color out of Alameda. What you should also know is the backers/writers of Measure A were among the most liberal in our community and were preservationists. It was inevitable at the time that Harbor Bay Isle would be formed by infill. Money talked. Never a thought was had to keep Bay Farm Island with its rich soil and abundant crops because politically Alameda had been taken over.

A vote swept out the old council and installed three new council members who were not racist and just wanted to keep the town's character and lower density. Now Alameda had few blacks and the town was so unique that some folks who grew up in the east end never traveled to the west end.

Yes, there were people who spoke of anyone who was not someone who was born in Alameda as an "outsider" no matter what the color. Yes, a local teacher helped organize a sit in in Franklin Park with tents and all that went with it. Yes, people camped and picketed the Mayor's home. That WAS a turbulent time. Measure A came a few years after that. I grew up in Oakland and had to work my way into Alameda culture. I was in the mix during the Measure A time and I can say honestly we never thought of it as a racist event.

Tenney

Help Out

Great article showcasing what folks with a vision can get done in Oakland. We need volunteers for Oaklavia — planned for June 27th (downtown/uptown) and Oct 10th (Fruitvale). Please contact me if you can help. Karen@walkoaklandbikeoakland.org or 510 654 6346 walkoaklandbikeoakland.org for more info.

Karen Hester

Get Involved

What an amazing success story and kudos to the *East Bay Express* for covering it. Let this be a lesson to us all that getting involved at the beginning of a process (the Whole Foods example here) — in the planning stages — is key to success. We must be proactive and not sit back and wait to complain afterwards. Continued success to WOBO — keep up the great work!

Anonymous

To share this story go to ebx.ly/pr/letters

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Please provide your full name, address, and daytime phone number, although we will only print your name, city, and affiliation. Send submissions to Letters@EastBayExpress.com or Letters, *East Bay Express*, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607. Letters are edited for length and clarity.

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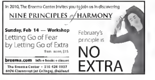

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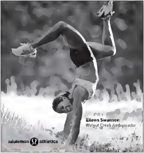

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SEVEN DAYS

JOURNALISTS REFUSE TO BE INTERVIEWED

Reporters who were secretly taped by Jerry Brown's ex-spokesman would not tell their stories to official investigators looking into the matter

By Robert Gammon

When the Alameda County District Attorney's Office announced last week that it would not file charges against a former spokesman for Jerry Brown, the news hardly generated a whisper. It was a stark contrast to last November, when the *San Francisco Chronicle* splashed a story across its front page about how attorney general flak Scott Gerber had secretly taped the phone calls of six journalists. In an interview on Monday with the *Express*, District Attorney Nancy O'Malley revealed why the *Chronicle* and other newspapers may have allowed a page-one story to die a quiet death — the journalists refused to be interviewed.

O'Malley said that when her office contacted the reporters — including longtime *Chronicle* journalist Carla Marinucci — they referred her to their attorneys. The attorneys then cited the state's shield law as to why they wouldn't talk.

Nancy O'Malley

Marinucci did not return phone calls for this story, but the decision to refuse an interview is odd after her paper made such a huge deal about the tapings. It's also unclear as to how the shield law, designed to protect confidential sources, would apply to a case in which reporters were unknowingly taped by a government official. Gerber resigned over the incident because he violated his office's prohibition on taping people without consent. O'Malley got involved when Brown asked her to conduct an independent investigation.

Without the reporters' version of events, O'Malley said she had no choice but to dismiss the case. However, even if the reporters had been interviewed, O'Malley might not have filed charges. The reason is that she said she would have to prove that the reporters had an "expectation of privacy." And that would be a tough case to make, because all of the calls were for "on-the-record interviews."

O'Malley declined to discuss her decision's ramifications. But her standard would lead one to conclude that all "on-the-record" conversations between journalists and sources can be secretly taped by either party without fear of repercussions. And that could represent a significant change in local journalistic practice.

Mercury's Ugly Record

The flap over the secret recordings stemmed from a story by Marinucci about Mercury Insurance, the state's third-largest auto insurer. Marinucci's piece concerned a ballot summary by Brown's office that neglected to note that a statewide initiative backed by Mercury will allow auto insurers to raise rates on low-income drivers. Coincidentally, Marinucci broke another story this week, revealing that Mercury has been involved in some ugly practices.

According to a report by the state Department of Insurance that Marinucci obtained, Mercury engaged in discriminatory and possibly illegal activities for more than a decade. It's not clear whether Mercury will face any penalties, but consumer advocate Harvey Rosenfield told Marinucci that if voters approve Proposition 17 in June, it will allow the insurance company to "legalize the kind of discriminatory surcharges that they were caught doing by investigators."

The state investigation, which ran from the mid-1990s to 2004, revealed that Mercury apparently discriminated against artists, actors, dancers, military personnel, emergency vehicle drivers, and people who had been in accidents caused by others, in violation of state law. The company also allegedly duped new customers by quoting discounts that it never provided and requested that its customers reveal their "national origin."

Prop 17 would overturn existing consumer protections, allowing Mercury and other insurers to charge higher rates to people who have let their auto insurance lapse. The company is advertising the proposition as a way to give discounts to drivers who have maintained their insurance, but consumer experts generally agree that the measure would adversely impact low-income motorists the most. Attorney General Brown also greatly helped Mercury by not mentioning this fact in the official ballot summary for the June Election.

Measure B Clobbered

Measure B, the widely criticized initiative sponsored by Alameda Point developer SunCal, lost badly at the polls last week, garnering a pathetic 15 percent of the vote. The "no" votes accounted for 85 percent, meaning the measure lost by a whopping 70 points. The lopsided loss came as no surprise to SunCal officials, who made the unusual move of conceding defeat the day before the polls opened.

Three-Dot Roundup

The *Berkeley Daily Planet* was defrauded by its payroll contractor for possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to Becky O'Malley, the paper's editor and co-owner. ... An Oakland City Council committee referred a proposal by City Attorney John Russo to double the city's campaign contribution limits to the city's Public Ethics Commission. ... In a speech to the Oakland chambers of commerce last week, Mayor Ron Dellums appeared to be setting the stage for a reelection bid. ... Campaign finance records show that mayoral candidate Don Perata was paid $260,000 last year by the state's powerful prison guard's union for "campaign consulting," even though the union mounted no political campaigns. ... And the campaign of Republican Senate hopeful Carly Fiorina became infamous with a web video portrayed of rival Tom Campbell as "a demon sheep." ●

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ECO WATCH

CHEVRON BANKING ON THE COURTS

The company spurns Jerry Brown and environmentalists, hoping that a court decision will green light its proposed expansion of the Richmond refinery

By Nate Seltenrich

Three environmental justice groups that successfully halted a major overhaul of Chevron's Richmond refinery have discovered that the big oil company prefers the courtroom to the bargaining table. Last year, the groups convinced the Contra Costa County Superior Court that Chevron's environmental impact report failed to address a number of critical issues related to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Chevron appealed the decision in July and has refused to negotiate outside of court for an end to the impasse — even after the environmental groups backed down on a number of their initial demands by agreeing to a proposed settlement from California Attorney General Jerry Brown.

Collectively represented by Earthjustice, the three organizations — Communities for a Better Environment, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, and West County Toxics Coalition — have grown frustrated with the oil giant's tactics. "They want to do this really quietly through a court mediation process where they can slow down the process of finding a resolution," said Nile Malloy, Northern California program director for Communities for a Better Environment. "They are unwilling to entertain the attorney general's offer in any sort of way."

Chevron spokesman Brent Tippen would not elaborate on why the company had declined to negotiate outside of court. "We appreciate the interest of the attorney general and others that have expressed interest in mediating, but we ask that they respect the ongoing court of appeals mediation process," he said. "We believe that the court of appeals mediation presents the best venue for discussion."

Work began on Chevron's Energy and Hydrogen Renewal Project in September 2008 after it was approved by the Richmond City Council. Designed primarily to enable the refinery to process a wider range of crude oils, the project also calls for the replacement of 1960s-era hydrogen power plants and the construction of a 9.5-mile hydrogen pipeline connecting the new plant to the rest of the refinery. It does not allow for increased crude processing capacity.

Chevron's plan underwent a four-year permitting process and was reviewed by three independent consultants, as well as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Tippen noted. However, the environmental groups argued that Chevron's environmental impact report failed to account for increased pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that would result from processing heavier grades of crude oil. They demanded that Chevron provide a new report and not be allowed to process dirty crude. When the Richmond City Council approved the project, the groups sued both parties.

But through its endorsement of the attorney general's recent proposal, the coalition has softened its stance a bit. At the February 2 Richmond City Council meeting, the groups threw their support behind Brown's plan and encouraged the city to do the same. "The attorney general's proposal is way off from what we asked for," said Sandy Saeteurn, the Asian Pacific Environmental Network's lead organizer in Richmond. "We asked for a cap on expansion."

Now, however, she sees the concessions as a sensible starting point, and said her group would be willing to budge even further — if only Chevron would come to the table. "We're not trying to stop expansion," said Saeteurn. "We're just making sure that the city and Chevron are making sure they're not polluting the community even more than they are now. We are asking for pollution reduction in some areas."

The attorney general's plan contains provisions to increase energy efficiency at the refinery 20 percent by 2020, generate green jobs through the installation of 30 megawatts worth of photovoltaic power both on-site and in the surrounding community, and reduce air pollution by installing flare-prevention equipment, limiting the weight of incoming crude, and replacing a number of 1930s-era boilers.

The proposal came six months after Brown first offered to intervene. Chevron has balked at negotiations ever since. In December, its threats to downsize or leave Richmond, taking with it thousands of jobs and 40 percent of the city's tax base, suggested it wouldn't shy away from hardball tactics. At a January meeting in Sacramento hosted by Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, Chevron sent only a lobbyist. A follow-up meeting was postponed indefinitely because Chevron pulled out entirely.

"Chevron has not been fair in terms of trying to find a resolution," Malloy said. "We're just concerned that Chevron is trying to do some behind-the-door dealings and not focus on the real issue of putting people back to work and protecting the environment." The environmental coalition, meanwhile, has further strengthened its position by partnering with the labor group Contra Costa Building Trades and by earning support from the Service Employees International Union.

The company's threats to downsize or leave Richmond suggested it wouldn't shy away from hardball tactics

At this point, Chevron's next meeting with Earthjustice and the three environmental groups will likely not take place until February 23 in San Francisco, when oral arguments are scheduled for the appeal — and where Chevron seems to be banking on a victory. A decision from the appellate court could take up to ninety days. If Chevron does win, construction could resume immediately; if it doesn't, it may finally be forced to bargain.

"I've always advocated that this should be settled," said Richmond City Councilman Tom Butt. "Both the environmental groups and the attorney general's office have approved this plan, so I think it's got a lot of credibility. ... At this point, if [they] could settle this thing and move on, it's probably for the good."

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Jonathan Riley

Dan Altwarg of Markus Supply says he might fight an effort to put a stadium where his business is.

MAKING ROOM FOR THE OAKLAND A'S?

Some Jack London Square business owners might be willing to move if the price is right, but others say no.

By Jonathan Riley

When Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums unveiled two new ballpark sites for Jack London Square late last year, it rekindled hope that the A's may not leave town after all. But actually building a stadium on either of the new sites may ultimately require the cooperation of property owners whose businesses would have to relocate. During recent interviews, several property owners expressed skepticism that the city will offer them a fair deal to move. Others, though, appear willing to play ball.

Merrit Sher, of Metrovation Brokerage, for example, was blunt: "If the price was right, we'd sell," he said. Metrovation owns several properties on the proposed "Jack London North" site, which is west of Broadway in an area bounded by Jefferson and Market streets and Interstate 880 and Second Street. Sher added, however, that his company has not yet been contacted by the city. "All I've heard is what has been in the papers," he said.

Eric Angstadt, deputy director of the city's Community and Economic Development Agency, said that the city has chosen to not contact property owners because it hasn't compiled a comprehensive plan for acquiring the land. The city also is awaiting word from Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig on whether a blue-ribbon panel that studied the Jack London Square sites thinks they are viable. Dellums spokesman Paul Rose said the task force is scheduled to report its findings to Selig next week, although it's not clear when the commissioner will make the results public. "It's purely speculative at this point," Angstadt said. "We're waiting for baseball to give us an answer before we can take the next step."

However, even if the next step is favorable for Oakland, it may still turn out to be difficult dealing with some businesses that don't want to move. Dan Altwarg, of Markus Supply and Hardware, said he is "devastated" by the idea of being forced to relocate his business, which is also within the "Jack London North" site. Altwarg said, "Of course we'll have to consider their offer." As to whether they would accept it, though, he said he was "not saying no, I'm saying I don't know," but then added, "I think we're gonna have to fight it."

If property owners choose to fight the city's offer to buy their land and pay them to move elsewhere, then the city likely would be forced to use eminent domain, which can sometimes result in drawn-out, ugly legal battles. Dellums has said that the city would use redevelopment funds — and not the city's general fund — to buy land for the ballpark and pay for business relocations. For the record, the owners of the *Express*, which leases office space from Metrovation, are open to relocating, even though the paper just moved to Jack London Square in May of last year. "We support a downtown-area ballpark for the Oakland A's, and assuming that we and our landlord would be properly compensated, we would be happy to move," said *Express* co-owner Stephen Buel.

The announcement of the new Jack London Square sites was prompted by attempts by team co-owner Lew Wolff to move the A's to San Jose. Wolff also previously had tried to move the team to Fremont, but his plans ran up against vocal opposition from the local community. However, Fremont city leaders recently unveiled a proposal to build a new ballpark at the old NUMMI auto plant, which is scheduled for closure soon. As for Wolff's plans to move to San Jose, they must overcome the San Francisco Giants' territorial claims to the South Bay.

The other new Jack London Square site is known as "Victory Court," at the Lake Merritt Channel, east of Oak Street and south of I-880. Jonathan Bronikar of East Bay Restaurant Supply, which occupies land within the proposed ballpark location, said that he "wants the A's to stay" and is "all about Oakland," but also noted that "it's difficult to uproot a wholesale business."

Peerless Coffee and Tea is another business on the Victory Court site, and the one that may be most impacted if forced to move. "We've got a building full of packaging and roasting equipment specifically designed for this facility. So it would be very expensive for the city to pay to move us," said George Vukasin Jr., co-owner with his father of the third-generation business. Vukasin Sr. is no stranger to sports teams. He served for years as president of the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum board and has been a major proponent of keeping Oakland's teams in town.

But when it's their own property being considered for redevelopment, even longtime team backers may drive a hard bargain. When asked whether they would be open to a proposal from the city, Vukasin Jr. said: "It's a tough question. It all depends what they're proposing."

He quoted an estimate of about $30 million, which he based on the cost to Peet's Coffee to build their new roasting plant in Alameda. Vukasin Jr. said that Peerless and Peet's have similarly sized operations. He noted that he and his family are "huge fans of the A's and huge fans of keeping them in Oakland," but he also predicted that if the city were to attempt to go to court and confiscate property by purchasing it through eminent domain, there would be a backlash. "I think people would come out of the woodwork," he said. ●

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OAKS THEATRE TO CLOSE?

The lease for the longtime Berkeley movie house expires February 28. But it could be saved by new operators.

By Nate Seltenrich

By the end of this month, the historic Oaks Theatre on upper Solano Avenue in Berkeley may be without an operator. Metropolitan Theatres Corporation has announced it will not renew its five-year lease when it expires on February 28. And currently, no plan is in place for a successor — although there are hopes that the operators of the Elmwood and Cerrito theaters will take it over.

The building is owned and managed by John Gordon of Berkeley-based Gordon Commercial Real Estate, which bought it three years ago. Gordon said he is actively looking for a new tenant, preferably another movie-theater operator. "That's why I bought the building, to keep it as a movie theater," he said.

Last week, the 16,000-square-foot Oaks Theater was listed on Gordon's web site as an available property. It was constructed in 1925 as a single-screen theater and converted to two screens in 1973. Its current seating capacity of 1,000 could be augmented by renovating the existing unused balcony — or, Gordon suggested, by adding screens. This would make it more financially viable for most operators, including Landmark Theatres, which runs the Albany Twin at the other end of Solano. Gordon is asking a monthly lease price of $0.75 per square foot, or approximately $12,000.

Gordon said he has yet to receive any interest but thinks a local operator would be better suited to theater than the Los Angeles-based Metropolitan, which only had one location in Northern California. An increasingly prominent name in East Bay independent film is Rialto Cinemas, which started in Santa Rosa in 2000 and expanded to Berkeley's Elmwood in 2007. In June 2009 it took over El Cerrito's newly renovated Cerrito theater from Speakeasy Theaters, the defunct former operator of the Parkway in Oakland, and according to proprietor Ky Boyd has enjoyed a successful first year there.

Boyd would neither confirm nor deny rumors among community members and Oaks employees that Rialto Cinemas was interested in the theater. He was, however, aware of the lease's upcoming expiration. "We're always looking for other opportunities," he said, but declined to comment further.

The Oaks has experienced its share of difficulties. Metropolitan took over for previous operator Allen Michaan of Renaissance Rialto Cinemas, owner of the Grand Lake Theater. Michaan, who restored the art-deco theater in 1994 using period décor, cited ongoing problems with obtaining first-run art films as his reason for losing it in 2005. And Landmark Theatres' well-established presence in Berkeley, particularly the proximity of the Albany Twin, may continue to make it tough for a new theater operator to keep the Oaks alive. ●

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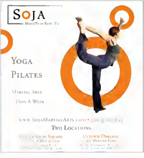

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The Cancer in the Oakland Mayor's Race

There's evidence that Don Perata is attempting to circumvent Oakland's campaign contribution limits by using a statewide fund to fight cancer

By Robert Gammon

At first glance, Don Perata's sponsorship of a statewide measure that would raise funds for cancer research seems perfectly understandable. After all, the former leader of the California Senate has been battling prostate cancer since May of last year. But in recent months, there have been growing indications that Perata's involvement in the proposed ballot initiative involves a motive beyond finding a cure for cancer — namely, to help him become the next mayor of Oakland. In fact, there is evidence that Perata may be attempting to use the cancer-research initiative to skirt state and local campaign finance laws in ways that could give him an unfair advantage over his mayoral opponents.

Last week, for example, Perata used funds from a political committee that is supposed to support the cancer-research initiative on a glossy mailer that he sent to an unknown number of Oakland residents. Although it's unclear whether he sent the mailer to residents of other cities, it's addressed, "Dear Fellow Oakland Voter," and there is no denying that it serves to help enhance his image as the mayoral campaign season gets underway. The mailer also was sent from his official mayoral campaign headquarters in Oakland.

Perata's use of the cancer-measure committee's funds in this manner makes little sense unless his true aim is to boost his mayoral campaign, experts say. Indeed, the cancer-research initiative, which would raise taxes on cigarettes, hasn't even qualified for the ballot yet. Doug Heller, executive director of the Los Angeles-based nonprofit Consumer Watchdog, which keeps close tabs on the state's initiative process, noted that the proposition will probably face potent opposition from Big Tobacco because it proposes to raise California cigarette taxes by $1 a pack. In other words, it's foolhardy, Heller said, to spend money now on a local mailer when the tobacco industry will spend millions in the summer and fall attempting to kill the initiative. "Every dollar will be precious in this campaign," Heller said.

Campaign finance reports also indicate that Perata is muddying the waters between the cancer-research measure and his mayoral campaign in ways that raise legal and ethical questions. Under California law, it is illegal for a candidate to use funds from a statewide ballot measure committee, with no contribution limits, to support a campaign for an office that does have donation limits. Nonetheless, Perata has hired at least three consultants to work on both campaigns, raising questions as to whether they are being paid by the cancer-research committee to work on his mayoral campaign, in violation of state law.

Moreover, interviews with campaign figures and Perata's own finance reports reveal little evidence that the highly paid consultants are doing much work on behalf of the cancer-research initiative. But at least two of the consultants, Tiffany Whiten and Christina Niehans, have played prominent roles in his mayoral effort.

"He has to be very careful that the ballot measure is not paying for the mayoral campaign," said Bob Stern, president of the Center for Governmental Studies in Los Angeles and former general counsel to the California Fair Political Practices Commission. "That's the problem when you have a candidate campaign and a ballot-measure campaign at the same time."

Perata spokesman Jason Kinney said the former senator has been scrupulous about keeping the two campaigns' expenditures separate, although he acknowledged that the committees share office space and personnel. Kinney said helping the cause to cure cancer has been a "personal passion" for Perata "for a long time."

But campaign finance records raise doubts about whether Perata is really serious about helping the tobacco-tax measure win. The ex-senator seems to be using the cancer-research committee to fund his legendarily lavish lifestyle. Money that could have been saved for the battle against Big Tobacco has been used to dine at posh restaurants and stay at luxury hotels, including the Inn at Spanish Bay in Pebble Beach, campaign finance records show. Perata has labeled these expenditures as "fund raising" activities, but there is no evidence from his finance reports that he actually raised any money during these events.

Local good government activists also fear that Perata's access to at least $700,000 from a statewide ballot initiative will disadvantage his main competitor in the Oakland mayor's race, Councilwoman Jean Quan, or scare off other potential candidates who might be thinking of jumping in. At the very least, the cancer-research committee seems to provide him with a huge advantage over his opponents.

Perata's glossy mailer uses official-looking letterhead designed to make it appear as if he is still the leader of the state Senate, even though he was termed out more than a year ago. The mailer depicts the senator in a serious pose above a large headline that reads: "In a word: CANCER." The mailer's small print says it was paid for by his ballot measure committee Hope 2010, "with major funding by Leadership California Committee & Voters Organized for Community Empowerment."

That wording seems designed to make voters believe that the mailer had broad-based support from others. But in reality, all the funds were controlled by Perata. The Leadership California Committee no longer exists, having been renamed last year as Hope 2010. And the funds from Voters Organized for Community Empowerment appear to have come from "Taxpayers for Perata," a committee the senator established several years ago. Perata's committee gave Voters Organized for Community Empowerment $155,000 in July. And then four months later, it donated $152,000 back to him by it giving to Hope 2010.

Perata transformed his Leadership California Committee into Hope 2010 last year, with the specific intent of supporting a statewide cancer-research measure that would coincide with his 2010 run for mayor. Hope 2010 began this year with more than $700,000 in the bank, most of which was leftover from Leadership California. Perata originally called this committee "Rebuilding California" and set it up to finance the statewide infrastructure bond measures in 2006.

The official address for Hope 2010, according to the mailer, is 502 Oakland Avenue in Oakland. That's also the official address of Perata's mayoral campaign headquarters. Kinney said that "it's more cost effective" to run both campaigns out of the same headquarters. He said that the mayoral campaign pays for two-thirds of the office, and Hope 2010 pays for one-third. During a recent visit to 502 Oakland Avenue, there was a small sign on the door advertising Perata's mayoral campaign, but no mention whatsoever of Hope 2010.

The apparent use of money from one campaign committee to advance the goals of another has prompted state ethics investigations in the past. The Fair Political Practices Commission has examined similar situations involving both Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante. Allegations that Schwarzenegger used 2006 ballot measure committees to help his reelection campaign eventually led to tighter state rules. Meanwhile, the Fair Political Practices Commission sued Bustamante, alleging that he had illegally transferred funds from a committee with no donation limits into his 2002 gubernatorial committee and paid for expenses in his governor's campaign out of committees with no fund-raising or expenditure limits. In 2004, Bustamante agreed to pay a civil fine of $263,000, the largest ever resulting from a commission action.

State law prohibits Perata from using Hope 2010 to fund his mayoral campaign, according to Roman Porter, executive director of the state Fair Political Practices Commission. However, because the mailer doesn't specifically mention

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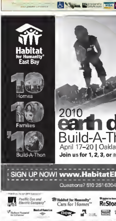
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his mayoral bid and only talks about the cancer-research initiative, it may not technically violate the law. Still, there's no doubt that the mailer will help his public image.

Setting aside the legal propriety of Perata's actions, the mailer itself appears to be a questionable use of money by one of California's savviest politicians. "Don Perata has run many statewide ballot measure campaigns," said Consumer Watchdog's Heller. "And so the idea that you would do this now with a mailer makes no sense — unless there is another political purpose for it."

Committees like Hope 2010 typically exist to do two things: raise money and help with campaign advertising. But there is almost no evidence of fund raising and it's too early for advertising, which raises questions about what Perata's campaign consultants are being employed to do.

Finance records show that the cancer committee received only two outside donations during the last six months of 2009. One $10,000 contribution came from Perata's longtime friend Ed DeSilva, who has been his single-largest campaign contributor over the years and who can be counted on to write a big check anytime he launches a new endeavor. And the other donation, also for $10,000, came from Richard Lee, the founder of Oaksterdam University — right around the same time that Perata announced his endorsement of Lee's statewide pot legalization measure.

Yet the committee has spent more than $200,000 on consultants, including $25,000 to Oakland Councilman Ignacio De La Fuente, who is one of Perata's oldest friends and closest allies. Hope 2010 also spent $100,000 on three consultants who also are on Perata's mayoral campaign payroll.

The primary committee established to fund the cancer-research measure is known as "Californians for a Cure," and was created by the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, and the American Heart Association. The leader of Californians for a Cure, American Lung Association of California Vice President Paul Knepprath, said in an interview that Perata's campaign staffers have not played a role in their efforts. And as for Perata himself, Knepprath praised the state senator for coming up with the idea for a 2010 ballot measure and being "a cheerleader for it." But Knepprath said Perata has not played an active role with Californians for a Cure. Hope 2010 was the largest donor to Californians for a Cure, however, contributing $150,000 to the committee last year.

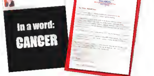
Yet despite having not much to show for their work on the cancer-research initiative, Perata's campaign consultants have been paid well by Hope 2010. For example, Tiffany Whiten, who worked on his senatorial staff, received $[illegible] from the committee in the second half of 2009. And Christina Niehaus, who has worked on previous Perata campaign committees, received $[illegible]. Longtime Perata staffer Chris Lehman was paid nearly $[illegible].

Whiten, Niehaus, and Lehman also have been working on the mayor's race, which held numerous fund raisers and campaign events in 2009 and received $115,000 in donations. Yet even though Whiten and Niehaus appeared to have done more in that campaign, they were paid about the same as what they received from the cancer-research committee, raising questions about whether it has been subsidizing their work on the mayoral race. Perata's mayoral campaign, for example, paid Whiten $13,000, and Niehaus racked up $18,000 in fees in 2009.

Kinney said Hope 2010 has been heavily involved in legal and policy research for the initiative. He said Niehaus did "administrative work" for Hope 2010 last year, but now is employed exclusively by the mayoral campaign. And he said Whiten splits administrative duties between both committees.

While questionable, Perata's payments to these campaign consultants may be legal under another gray area of campaign finance law. The law does not specify how much work a consultant needs to perform in order to get paid. Thus there may be nothing to stop Perata from paying these consultants less money from his mayoral campaign, even though they may do more work for it. In addition, there appears to be no legal prohibition preventing the consultants from working on both campaigns at the same time and at the same events, because they can be paid on retainer and not for actual hours worked or for specific tasks accomplished.

In short, Perata's decision to pay his consultants large fees for little apparent work on the cancer-research committee may be giving him another leg up in the Oakland mayor's race.



The cancer flyers seem to have targeted just Oakland voters.

The cancer funds also paid for a stay at the posh Inn at Spanish Bay in Pebble Beach.

Perata's use of cancer-research funds to eat at upscale restaurants and stay at expensive hotels also provides more evidence that his committee doesn't appear to be a genuine effort to find a cure for cancer. For example, one of his new favorite haunts appears to be Le Rivage, a hotel and restaurant on the Sacramento River in the state's capital. He charged at least two meals totaling $668 from Le Rivage to the Hope 2010 committee last year and labeled them "fund-raising."

Typically, when politicians raise funds, they receive campaign donations either at a specific event or shortly thereafter. But none of the many restaurant meals that Perata charged to Hope 2010 last year and called "fund-raising" appear to have actually resulted in donations to the committee. For example, he has charged at least four meals at Adesso in North Oakland, totaling $1,070, and labeled them "fund raising," even though the committee recorded no donations on the dates of the meals or in the weeks afterward. Same with a $230 meal at Trader Vic's in Emeryville.

Kinney called the meals "legitimate" and said they involved "prospecting" about future fund-raising efforts. But finance records show that Perata also took care of his reading needs using the Hope 2010 committee, charging $222 at Books Inc. in Alameda and $670 at Diesel bookstore in Oakland. Plus, he spent $886 on his subscription to *The Economist* magazine.

One of the candidate's largest single expenditures was a late-July stay at the Inn at Spanish Bay in Pebble Beach, a posh resort overlooking Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean. He spent $663 for the getaway, and again labeled it "fund-raising." Kinney also called this expenditure "legitimate," even though the committee received no outside donations until Lee's contribution, three months later.

Perata can't blame anyone for mislabeling these expenditures, because, as the official treasurer of Hope 2010, it is his legal responsibility to make sure they're accurate.

Indeed, the commingling of Perata's two campaigns appears to confuse even the candidate himself at times. At the end of the year, for example, he spent $447 on a "meeting" at Miss Pearl's Jam House in Jack London Square out of Hope 2010 funds. But then he subsequently noted on his campaign finance reports that the mayoral campaign should have paid for the meal.

The most potentially significant ramifications from Perata's use of the cancer-research committee could be on the Oakland mayor's race. As this newspaper reported last week, Perata's main opponent, Councilwoman Quan, had more money in her mayoral campaign account at the end of last year than the former senator had in his. But if Perata continues to use the cancer-research funds to enhance his image and keep his mayoral consultants well paid, then Quan will surely be at a disadvantage.

Some local good government advocates also worry that other potential candidates will be afraid to jump into the race knowing that he has the committee's money literally at his fingertips. "If I were a candidate and I knew that my opponent has control of an account with more than $700,000 in it that he can use to promote his image around town, that would concern me," said Ralph Kanz, former president of the Oakland Public Ethics Commission.

Perata also stands to benefit from a recent recommendation by City Attorney John Russo to raise the total expenditure limit in the mayoral campaign from $379,000 to $758,000 this year. As this newspaper and others noted last week, Russo's proposal would help Perata because his mayoral campaign had already burned through more than $100,000, primarily on consultants. And if the council were ultimately to reject Russo's recommendation, it would hurt Perata because he would be allowed to spend only about $270,000 this year from his mayoral account. By contrast, Quan is running an almost all-volunteer effort and has spent only about $7,000 so far, while raising more than $66,000. That means she and other potential candidates can still spend more than $370,000 before election day under the current rules.

Russo's proposal and the presence of the cancer-research committee also could undermine Oakland's new voting format, which will go into effect this year. One of the primary goals of ranked-choice voting is to encourage more candidates to enter the political process. But if they're concerned about having to raise lots of money just to keep up with Perata, then they may choose to stay out of the race, thereby giving him a clearer shot at the mayor's office. ●

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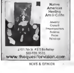

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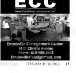

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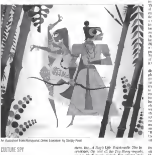

An illustration from *Ramayana: Divine Loophole* by Sanjay Patel

CULTURE SPY

A GRAPHIC RAMAYANA

Pixar animator Sanjay Patel brings his sharp sensibility to ancient Hindu myth

By Rachel Swan

Pixar animator Sanjay Patel grew up in San Bernardino, where his parents own the Lido Motel right off Route 66. He fit the SoCal stereotype to a T. As a kid, Patel loved hot rods, skateboards, and Japanese animation. He avidly watched the TV show *Knight Rider*. He listened to punk rock and dark electronic music and wanted to be a surfer. Not surprisingly, he felt little connection to his parents' Hindu culture. "I had no desire to sit down on a mat and count prayer beads and chant a name that was meaningless to me," Patel said. It would take another couple decades for that aversion to become a fixation.

Seven years ago, Patel began treating his cultural lineage as a muse. By then he had worked at Pixar for seven years, and built an impressive portfolio. (It now includes *Monsters, Inc.*, *A Bug's Life*, *Ratatouille*, *The Incredibles*, *Up*, and all the *Toy Story* sequels, plus a Björk music video.) His artistic style hovered somewhere between mid-century modern and manga. He actually didn't need the imprimatur of a big animation company since his own illustrations were so one-of-a-kind. Patel emphasized geometric lines and blocky composition. He drew people with asymmetrical features and made all the pages bristle with color. ("Putting a pen to paper is like sex to me," he said. "I fucking love it.") It wasn't really the stuff of religious iconography, but Patel found something in Hindu mythology that resonated — even for a self-described agnostic. He liked its elaborate storylines and romantic intrigue. He liked that each deity had a distinct personality.

Not to mention that those religious icons were bleeding into the pop-culture landscape around him. For a while, Patel got heavy into trance music, and he saw a lot of flyers circulating with knockoff images of Vishnu in lotus flowers. "That caught my attention," he said. "My parents were Hindu and I grew up in a house filled with Hindu iconography. Somehow trance was one of the gateways to me understanding the stuff that was in my house."

Patel is a lover of sharp edges in everything from his drawings to his sartorial choices — last week he showed up to Pixar in black Converse, a leather jacket, and a Ramones T-shirt. He characterizes himself as an art school drop-out — short hand for someone who would rather operate on instinct than follow a rubric. But he could easily transmogrify his style into something more ornate and painterly, if the occasion called.

Initially, he just wanted to make a poster of Hindu deities. Then he thought of turning the poster into a place mat and handing it out to Indian restaurants on University Avenue. Then he decided to make a full-fledged book of icons, at the behest of some friends who really dug his work. Patel self-published the first iteration, called *Little India*, and made a web site to go with it. The book caught on in the blogosphere and eventually got the attention of a literary agent from Plume, a division of Penguin. With the help of editor Emily Haynes, Patel transformed *Little India* into a larger picture book called *The Little Book of Hindu Deities*. Then he was ready to take on a more ambitious project. His new book — published by San Francisco-based Chronicle Books — offers a contemporary reimagining of *Ramayana*, the great Sanskrit epic. He said it was tantamount to illustrating the Bible.

"From day one, I kept trying to make the illustrations in the story really cute and simple," said the 35-year-old artist, who has a ground floor office in Pixar with novel chairs and Charlie Harper wallpaper. "I just kept trying to make it cute, cute, cute, and the story is anything but that. It's really dramatic, it's really violent, people fucking die." "Cute" actually worked in Patel's first book, for which he adopted a Sanrio graphic style, drawing the characters in pastel yellows and baby blues, with pencil-line mouths and disproportionately big eyes. *Ramayana* required a different approach, he said. Strong lines, bold patterns, everything flat and punchy. He poached elements from monographic design and Indian sculpture, as well as modern 2-D animation. "It was like, 'How do I take something that in India has been made in a full, decorative way and strip it down to its essence?'"

Patel actually spent a full year reading different versions of the *Ramayana* before creating his own. For the most part, he doesn't like reading, and he never enjoyed the canonical literature that was foisted on him in high school. "Like *Canterbury Tales*," Patel said. "Stuff that you're forced to read that just absolutely has no connection to you." But the *Ramayana* spoke to him in a different way. Over seven volumes, it detailed all the major events in the life of Rama, who is considered a terrestrial avatar of the god Vishnu. Like any epic tale, it's full of sex and death, long exiles, horrible betrayals, and small miracles that become cataclysmic. "Even if you just read my version, it's a very tragic story, because everybody suffers, everybody gets separated, only at the very end is there a modicum of happiness," Patel said. "If you read the full version everybody dies. It's like Greek tragedy."

Patel's own version, called *Ramayana: Divine Loophole*, is both a children's book and a graphic novel. It gets all the juice of the original story and crowds it with visual detail. In this version, Prince Rama is a warrior with electric-blue skin, dispatched to fight off the evil ten-headed villain Ravana. He's got a lover, Sita, who would walk through fire to prove her honor. He's got divine powers. And he's got haters. In chapter 3, Prince Rama is exiled by his stepmother and sent to the jungle for fourteen years. That part was the most fun to draw, said Patel, whose jungle landscapes are thick and green, often suggesting extension beyond the page. It's as though Alice suddenly got teleported through the looking glass.

Such elements fit Patel's sensibility. He's interlocked them into lovely story lines and the subconscious. He believes in Myers-Briggs personality types. He says one of the reasons he has stayed with Pixar so long was that his colleagues there also want to bring adult content into the animated domain. "Their chief priority is not to talk down to anybody, and to talk up to anybody," said Patel. "They make movies for themselves. In a movie like *Up*, for instance, there's some really dark and dramatic themes there. That's what we want to see. ... It's like, we're so sick and fucking tired of talking, dancing animals. We want, like, some real emotion, goddamnit." He continued: "I'm very much cut from their cloth."

Patel may gravitate to serious, substantive themes, but his tone in *Ramayana* is light and personable, almost to the point of being tongue-in-cheek. (The story begins: "Since this is an epic story, let's start with the most scandalous of characters, the bad guy.") That sort of makes sense, because the *Ramayana* was an oral history to begin with (supposedly, a god sang the original version to a murderer). It also befits Patel's personality, since there's no disconnect between his writing voice and his speaking voice. He said it took several edits to find the right balance of charm and snark. He wanted to mollify young readers but he also sought out adults — particularly folks like him, who grew up resisting Bollywood music and Mira Nair films, and have little motivation to read a seven-volume Hindu epic. "There are people like me who are adults who have never read the story," said Patel. "We need to come to it in a way that's very visual. Almost like a children's book." ●

Find Sanjay Patel at GheeHappy.com

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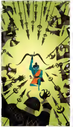
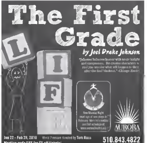


Rama



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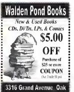
EXPRESSIONS gallery
The Modernists
Show Runs: February 13 - April 2, 2010
Show Opening: Sat, February 13, 2010
6-8 PM Refreshments.
Upcoming Events at Expressions Gallery:
Poetry Reading & Open Mike: Friday, Feb 19, 7-8 PM
Critics Circle: Feb 28, Sun 1-3 PM
Become an art critic
Critique the art of the Modernist Artists in the Show
Discussion led by Julie Verloon.
2035 Ashby Ave, Berkeley (1/2 block from Ashby Bart)
Hours: Wed - Sat 12 - 5 PM and Sun 12 - 3 PM
510-644-4930 www.expressionsgallery.org

Saturday February 13th at Midnight
Valentine's Show
Lingerie Contest (18+ to enter)
Performance by
the Crowd Pleasers
Great Prizes
THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW
Grand Theatre | 3200 Grand Ave, Oakland
$10 | All Ages



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Cal Performances
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2009–2010 Season

Masters of Persian Music—Three Generations
featuring Hossein Alizadeh, *tar*
Kayan Kalhor, *kamancheh*
Hamid Reza Nourbakhsh, *vocals*
Sat, Feb 13, 8 pm
Zellerbach Hall. Tickets start at $26

Following previous sold-out tours, the Masters dazzling new program spotlights the talents of tar (plucked lute) maestro Hossein Alizadeh, an inspiration to an entire generation of Iran's classical culture; kamancheh (spike fiddle) virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor, whose collaborations have been instrumental in popularizing Persian music in the West; and the astonishing young vocalist Hamid Reza Nourbakhsh, a leading disciple of the great Mohammad Reza Shajarian, who is touring North America for the first time.

Russian National Orchestra
Mikhail Pletnev, *artistic director & conductor*
Stefan Jackiw, *violin*
Lisa Delan, *soprano*
Volti, Robert Geary, *artistic director*
Fri, Feb 19, 7:30 pm
Zellerbach Hall. Tickets start at $28

They played with such captivating beauty that the audience gave an involuntary sigh of pleasure. —*Evening Standard*, London

Named Moscow's top orchestra in a Gramophone magazine poll of international music critics, the Russian National Orchestra, under the direction of founder Mikhail Pletnev, returns to Cal Performances for a concert celebrating its 20th anniversary.

Program: Pletnev/Yeats Song Cycle; Tchaikovsky/Violin Concerto in D Major; Shostakovich/Symphony No. 5

Angélique Kidjo
Sat, Feb 20, 8 pm
Zellerbach Hall. Tickets start at $24

One of the true stars of world music, Angélique Kidjo has spread her rhythmic Afro-fusion to the far reaches of the globe, cross-pollinating the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, jazz, and funk as well as influences from Europe and Latin America. Commanding the stage with her fun-loving personality and electrifying charisma, she returns to Cal Performances to perform songs from her new album, *OYO*.

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VALENTINE'S DAY EVENTS

ART GALLERIES

K Gallery. *Seeing Red: Explorations on the Softer Side of Love.* With paintings, sculpture, photographs, and handmade Valentines by [illegible] Feb. 12, 6-8 p.m. free. 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060. [illegible]

PERSONAL GROWTH

[illegible] **Love With Me Celebration.** One-day [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. [illegible] Berkeley. [illegible]

Julia's Dance & Tea Theater. Relationship Readings. [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 1-5 p.m. [illegible] Alameda. [illegible]

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Oakland Main Library. Word and Heart: Love Poetry Theater. [illegible] workshop. Sun., Feb. 14, 2-5 p.m. 125 14th Street, Oakland.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FUND RAISERS

Art House Gallery & Cultural Center. Valentine's Fireworks and Dance Party. Benefit for [illegible] relief effort featuring five [illegible] bands, plus a psychedelic light show. Sat., Feb. 13, 9 p.m. $13. 2905 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. [illegible]

Chabot Space & Science Center. Valentine's Day Love Rhythm. [illegible] Feb. 13-14, 1:30 & 3:30 p.m. [illegible] per couple. 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. [illegible] ChabotSpace.org.

[illegible] **Valentine's Day.** [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m. $15, $25. [illegible] San Francisco.

Good Vibrations. Be Our Valentine! [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14. 2504 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-8987. GoodVibes.com.

Rhythmix Cultural Works. Three-Ring Sweetheart Bingo. Thu., Feb. 11, 7-9:30 p.m. $20 for 10 games, plus a drink. 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060. Rhythmix.org.

KIDS

Oakland Children's Fairyland. Valentine's Day Parents' Night Out. Pizza dinner and opportunity for kids to make Valentine's cards. Sun., Feb. 14, 5:30-9:30 p.m. $30 per child, $20 per sibling. 2065 Berkeley Street, Berkeley.

LGBT

La Peña Theater. Queer Whipped: QTPOC Theater, For Love, Sex, & Romance. [illegible] word, theater, dance, burlesque, drag, and video. Feb. 12-13, 8 p.m. $8-$12. 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Blondie's on Telegraph. Valentine's Day Goal. [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 1:30 p.m. $10. 2351 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-8820. [illegible]

UC Berkeley. Singing Valentines Gems by UC Dance Ensembles. [illegible] anywhere on UC Berkeley campus. To order, call 510-642-3610, or email [illegible] berkeley.edu. Feb. 12-14, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. $20-$35. Telegraph Ave. at Bancroft Way, Berkeley.

CULINARY & WINE

[illegible] **Vegan Why Dance.** [illegible] vegan bars [illegible] and [illegible] by Sugar Tree Sweets and [illegible] gift bags, and a prize [illegible] Feb. 12, 7-10 p.m. $58. 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley.

[illegible] **Valentine.** Valentine's wine tasting with the 2008 Pinot Gris [illegible] Vineyards, a 2006 [illegible] Winemaker [illegible] will be on hand for a Q&A. Sat., Feb. 13, 12:30-2 & 3:30-5 p.m. [illegible] Livermore. 925-862-2282. [illegible]

Ferry Building. 7th Annual Food Love Me [illegible] [illegible] Napa Valley [illegible] Fri., Feb. 12, 5-8 p.m. [illegible] 1 Ferry Building, San Francisco. 415-[illegible]

Julia's Bayside @ Lounge. My Funky Valentine. Singles party hosted by DJ [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 8 p.m. 2231 [illegible] 510-451-4617 [illegible]

[illegible] **Valentine's Day Specials.** [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14. 2251 Broadway Ave., Oakland.

Pleasant Hill Community [illegible]: My Little Sweetheart Valentine Dinner & Dance Party. Includes pasta, salad, bread and dessert. Children welcome. Call 925-[illegible] a reservation. Fri., Feb. 12, 6-7:30 p.m. $12. 320 Civic Dr., Pleasant Hill.

[illegible] **Lounge. Valentine's Dinner.** Four-course meal prepared by Chef [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14. $65, $20 wine [illegible] 272 McAllister St., San Francisco. 415-[illegible]

Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto. Valentine's Day Valentine at Spenger's. [illegible] Feb. 12-14. 1919 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-845-7771. Spengers.com.

LITERARY EVENTS

[illegible] **Valentine Evening with [illegible]** [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 7 p.m. $10. 2288 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-848-3021. [illegible]

LIVE VARIETY

Grand Lake Theater. Valentine's Day Rocky Horror. [illegible] presents a special Valentine's Day edition of Rocky Horror with a lingerie contest, prizes, and a pre-show performance by the Crowd [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 11:50 p.m. $10. 3200 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-452-3556. [illegible]

Rhythmix Saloon. Jazz Valentine's Day Erotic Psychedelic Extravaganza. With [illegible] short films, [illegible] "Worst Ex Ever" and "Worst Sex Ever" [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m. $20. 411 Second St., Oakland. 510-465-8933.

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

[illegible] **Valentine's Day.** Special benefit performance of [illegible] Fri., Feb. 12, 8 p.m. $8, $12. 1929 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-644-8643. [illegible]

Oasis Theater. *Not My First Night*. Solo comedy show by [illegible] Feb. 13-14, 5 p.m. $25-$40. 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. 415-392-4400.

La Peña Theater. [illegible] East Bay 2010. [illegible] Fri., Feb. 11, 8 p.m. $15. 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org. [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 8 p.m. $12-$14. 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

StageWorks Theater. *On the Periphery of Love*: [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m.; Sun., Feb. 14, 3 p.m. $15-$25. 550 Sutter St., San Francisco. StageWorks.org.

MUSIC

[illegible] **Valentine's Day** dinner & dancing. Sun., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. [illegible] of the Mark, 1 Nob Hill, San Francisco. [illegible]

[illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 10:30 p.m. $10. Yoshi's San Francisco, 1330 Fillmore St., San Francisco. 415-655-5600. Yoshis.com.

[illegible] **Valentine's & Birthday Bash and Special Guests.** [illegible] Fri., Feb. 12, 8:30 p.m. $25. [illegible] 333 11th St., San Francisco. 415-522-0333. [illegible]

A Pre-Valentine's Bash. featuring [illegible] Feb. 10, 9 p.m. [illegible] 2380 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-6174. [illegible]

The Valentine [illegible] Party. [illegible] Fri., Feb. 12, 9 p.m. [illegible] 415-863-1221. [illegible]

[illegible] Wed., Feb. 17, 8 p.m.; Thu., Feb. 18, 8 p.m. $48. Yoshi's San Francisco, 1330 Fillmore St. 415-655-5600. Yoshis.com.

Valentine's Day [illegible] Fri., Feb. 12, 8 & 10 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 13, 8 & 10 p.m.; Sun., Feb. 14, 8 p.m. $40. Yoshi's, 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. [illegible] Yoshis.com.

Valentine's Day with [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 8 & 10 p.m. $30. Yoshi's San Francisco, 1330 Fillmore St., San Francisco. 415-655-5600. Yoshis.com.

Valentine's Party/Benefit: with [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 8 p.m. $6-$8. [illegible] 3158 Mission St., SF. 415-282-3325.

A Valentine's Dance & Love Fiesta & Dance Party featuring [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 9 p.m. $13. Art House Gallery & Cultural Center, 2905 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-472-3170.

A Very Special Valentine's Evening With [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 7 p.m. $40-$50. [illegible] 222 [illegible] St., San Francisco. [illegible]

EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

Justin Scales.

Every Rose Has Its Thorn

Find your next date at the Fuck Valentine's Day Erotic Psychotic Extravaganza

San Francisco comedian Justin Scales won't be pegged a romantic any time soon. "Love is bullshit," he said when asked to reveal his sentiments on intimacy and relationships. "It's just a way for weak people to cling onto other weak people and just siphon the souls of each other." But still there's hope, he conceded. "Every once in a while, a rose grows in a massive shit pile."

Scales' wariness is understandable when you look at his track record. He says he left home as a teenager because it was hard living with a mom on welfare. Not to mention the fact that he grew up near the University of California at Santa Barbara, which meant ample access to couches and kegs. "I got put in a group home for loving a police officer's face with my fist," he said. From there came a long string of disappointments, many the result of falling in love and getting jilted. "I tell a bunch of jokes about different chicks who pissed me off," Scales said. "Maybe I'll name and number them."

Such resentment made Scales the go-to act for Oakland's annual **Fuck Valentine's Day Erotic Psychotic Extravaganza**, sponsored by Tourettes Without Regrets. Ironically, many of its producers are happily paired off. Host Jason DeWolf is dating co-host Natasia Schlesinger (aka "Sis"), and Scales has a girlfriend, too. (He admits that she probably wouldn't appreciate some of his material.) Nonetheless, they all adhere to the credo that Valentine's Day sucks and, further, that all the tangible benefits go to Hallmark, Victoria's Secret, and chocolate companies. Last year, the Tourettes cabal expressed its misgivings through a night of sex toy giveaways, prank calls to exes, sex position demos, and interpretive dances based on bad one-night stands. They've heated it up for the second iteration, adding lewd burlesque dance by Ina Sher, a bit of "fierce flogging," and two short films — one about an asshole hotline, the other about a suicidal boyfriend. Naturally, Scales' forty-minute "fuck love" comedy set will be the main attraction.

Whether or not the Fuck Valentine's showcase is a great place to meet someone (as DeWolf theorized), or to bring a first date, remains to be seen. After all, it will surely be replete with masturbation-in-the-closet jokes and guys promising to make couch cushions their Valentines. Sounds appetizing. Then again, roses can grow in the most unlikely of places. Saturday, February 13, at **Merchant's Saloon** (401 2nd St., Oakland). 8 p.m. $10. TourettesWithoutRegrets.com

— Rachel Swan

To share this story, type: ebx.ly/p/scales

ATTRACTIONS

The Butterfly Garden Is Open Join Ann Southworth to wander the peaceful pathways, watch hummingbirds and butterflies and learn about butterfly gardening. Second Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Coyote Hills Regional Park, 8000 Patterson Ranch Rd., Fremont, 510-795-9385, EBParks.org.

Oakland Uptown Marketplace Featuring handmade jewelry, sculptures, ceramics, [illegible], photography, dolls, soaps, clothing, floral arrangements, greeting cards, and more. Info: 510-238-4920. Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., free. Frank Ogawa Plaza, at 14th and Broadway sts., Oakland.

Redwood Valley Railway Twelve-minute scenic journey by steam train through the [illegible] of Tilden Regional Park. Info: 510-548-6100. Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. $2 per ticket, or 5 tickets for $8. Tilden Regional Park, entrance off Wildcat Canyon Rd. and Grizzly Peak Blvd., Berkeley. [illegible]-2233.

University of California Botanical Garden See plants you won't find anywhere else — more than 12,000 species. In fact, free docent tours Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. Open daily 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Free admission on the first Thursday of every month. Daily. UC Berkeley Botanical Garden, 200 Centennial Dr., Berkeley. 510-643-2755, BotanicalGarden.berkeley.edu.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FUND-RAISERS

15th Annual Love Fest: Alternative Valentine's Day Ayo de León's annual Valentine's Day celebration. Spoken poetry by [illegible], music by [illegible], Poetry for the People, and special guests. Sun., Feb. 14, 8 p.m., $12-$14. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568, LaPena.org.

Be Our Valentine [illegible] appreciation night with complimentary chocolates and wine. Sun., Feb. 14. Good Vibrations, 2504 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-8987. www.goodvibes.com.

Chinese New Year Celebration Traditional Chinese New Year activities to commemorate the holiday. Sat., Feb. 13, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. $10.95-$14.95. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373, ChabotSpace.org.

Dundracon 34 Thirty-fourth annual game convention features 72 hours of RPGs, miniatures, CCGs, LARPs, board games, seminars, tournaments, martial arts, [illegible], RPGA, and dealers. Feb. 12-15. $38-$50. San Ramon Marriott, 2600 Bishop Dr., San Ramon. 925-963-1236.

Love at Sea on Valentine's (Sex [illegible]). [illegible] with party snacks, a mixer game and a [illegible]. For info, visit [illegible]. Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m., $15. [illegible] Golden Gate Yacht Club, 1 Yacht Rd., San Francisco.

Travelling Sweetheart Bingo Fri., Feb. 11, 7-9:30 p.m. $20 for [illegible] guests, plus a [illegible]. Rhythmix Cultural Works, 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060, Rhythmix.org.

Valentine's Illusions and Jake's Party Benefit for Haiti earthquake relief effort, featuring live [illegible] tribute bands, plus a psychedelic light show. Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m. $15. Art House Gallery & Cultural Center, 2905 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-472-3170.

Valentine's Day Love Illusions Simulated [illegible] mission to Mars with an [illegible] guest to the Center, chocolates, a [illegible] beverage, and a souvenir from the Red Planet. Fri., 13-14, 1:30 & 2:30 p.m., $80-$85 per couple. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373, ChabotSpace.org.

KIDS

Art Classes for Children with Alternative Ages 8-16 can learn to draw, work with clay, make simple prints, and enjoy an artistic environment in a group setting. Maximum five students per class. Call to reserve. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-noon, $5. NIAD Art Center, 551 23rd St., Richmond, 510-620-0290, NIADart.org.

Children's Fairyland Valentine Activities

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EAST BAY OPEN STUDIOS

PICKS

Dave Chappelle

Famous for his pop-star impersonations and postmodern caricatures (e.g., the black white-supremacist Clayton Bigsby), **Dave Chappelle** falls somewhere between George Carlin and Richard Pryor on the spectrum of comic greatness. He's smart, he's smirky and he goes just past the edge of political correctness. Best of all, he takes comedy into the realm of performance art. Chappelle's sudden departure to South Africa in 2005 only added to his mystique, spawning rumors of drug addiction that he later denied. In interviews, the comedian has explained that he likes to cut his own cloth. He'll give up a Comedy Central show in a heartbeat if the network execs don't let him steer its content. Chappelle performs this week at **The New Parish** (579 18th St., Oakland). He did a secret show there last year for a packed house, delivering a solid three hours' worth of material. This time it's open to everyone. Monday, Feb. 8-Saturday, Feb. 13, 8 & 11 p.m., $55. brTickets.com or TheNewParish.com — *Rachel Swan*

Dave Chappelle.

Cal Men's Basketball

The Golden Bears lead the Pac-10 and usually feast on the Washington schools. That should make it a very heart-warming Valentine's weekend for the men of Cal. The Bears host the Washington Huskies on Thursday, Feb. 11 (8 p.m. start), and then play their country cousins from Washington State in a matinee Saturday at 1 p.m. With only one final home weekend this season, this will be among the last opportunities to see seniors Theo Robertson, Jerome Randle, and Patrick Christopher do the thing they do — which is good enough to lead the conference and certainly more than enough to whip the Washingtons. $10-$25. CalBears.com — *Kibby Kleiman*

Featuring arts and crafts, puppet shows, children's theater shows, the animal of the day and more. Saturdays, 11 a.m., Sundays, 11 a.m., $6. Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Ave. (at Lake Merritt), Oakland. 510-452-2259. Fairyland.org.

[illegible] A creativity workshop for kids grades 2-12. [illegible] Fridays, 3:15-6 p.m., $15/session or $50/four sessions. Frank Bette Center for the Arts, 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Coyote Tales [illegible] monthly show introducing kids 3-5 to the natural world [illegible] Third Tuesday of every month, 10-11:30 a.m. & 2:30-4 p.m. [illegible] Coyote Hills Regional Park, 8000 Patterson Ranch Rd., Fremont. 510-795-9385. EBParks.org.

East Oakland Book Club [illegible] for teens and middle-school students. [illegible] Fourth Wednesday of every month, 2-3 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library, Martin Luther King Jr. Branch, 6833 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-615-5728. OaklandLibrary.org.

East Oakland Teen Anime Club Opportunity for teens to [illegible] anime films and [illegible] graphic novels. Second Wednesday of every month, 3-5 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library, Martin Luther King Jr. Branch, 6833 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-615-5728. OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] [illegible] for girls who want to earn leadership service hours. [illegible] high school [illegible] the younger girls at the [illegible] Center [illegible]

[illegible] activities, stories in sign language, singing French songs, nursery rhymes, and [illegible] games. Thursdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Girls Inc., Meyers Center, Alameda. 510-521-[illegible]

Harry's Kids: [illegible] [illegible] health van [illegible] Free [illegible] immunization [illegible] Third Tuesday of every month, 5:30-7 p.m. 510-444-[illegible]

[illegible] Certified instructor [illegible] classes just for kids ages 10-16 [illegible] Tuesdays, 5:15-7:15 p.m., $15 drop-in rate [illegible] Albany Rotate for Kids, 1249 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-524-9283.

Oakland Puppet Theater Sing-Along With Micah and Meko [illegible] Theater present. Tuesdays, [illegible] p.m., $4.95 for kids, $2 for each [illegible] sibling, free for adults [illegible] Studio Grey's Cafe, 4210 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-601-[illegible]

Oakland [illegible] Youth Speaks presents a monthly under-21 open mic [illegible] Second Friday of every month, 7 p.m. [illegible] 510-250-9636. YouthSpeaks.org. Oakland Art Gallery, 199 Kahn's Alley, Oakland. 510-637-0395. OaklandArtGallery.org.

[illegible] Beginning classes in Indian classical dance. Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. [illegible] College of Indian Classical Arts, 1958 [illegible] St.,

Oakland. 510-213-3442. [illegible]

[illegible] Second Wednesday of every month, 2:30-4:30 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library [illegible] 510-[illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

Teen [illegible] Meeting Second Thursday of every month, 3:55-5:15 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library, Main Branch, 125 14th St., Oakland. 510-238-3134. OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] Music, [illegible] games and movies. Thursdays, 3-5 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library [illegible] 3565 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland. 510-535-5620. OaklandLibrary.org.

Valentine's Day Petals [illegible] [illegible] Sun. Feb. 14, 5:30-8:30 p.m., $30 per child, $20 per sibling. Habitot Children's Museum, 2065 Kittredge Street, Berkeley.

Wildlife Theater On Saturdays, hear a story and meet an animal. On Sundays, meet more animals and learn cool [illegible] facts. Saturdays, 11:40 a.m. Sundays, 1:45 p.m., free with zoo admission. Oakland Zoo, 9777 Golf Links Rd., Oakland. 510-632-9525. OaklandZoo.org.

LGBT

Queerly Wednesdays A social gathering where transgender girls, cross-dressers, and first-timers are welcome. [illegible] Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., $15-20 donation requested. [illegible] 510-[illegible]

East Bay [illegible] Meeting Look for the "[illegible]" sign. [illegible] 510-845-0433.

Third Tuesday of every month, 7:30 p.m., free. [illegible] 2600 University Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-0433.

East Bay Front Runners Join the GLBT group for noncompetitive runs and walks, followed by brunch at a local restaurant. Visit the Web site for weekly locations. Saturdays, 9-11 a.m., free. EastBayFrontRunners.org. Berkeley Marina, 201 University Ave., Berkeley. [illegible]

Dguyzz 20s Discussion group for gay, bi, or questioning men in their twenties. Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., $5-$20 suggested donation. 510-548-8283. Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-8283. PacificCenter.org.

LGBT Youth Group Drop-in group for LGBT youth. Tuesdays: arts/crafts/writing/music. Wednesdays: youth leadership. Thursdays: hot topics/guest speakers. Fridays: open mixing/video. Outdoor [illegible] Tuesdays, 4-6 p.m., Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m., Thursdays, 4-6 p.m., Fridays, 4-6 p.m., free. 510-548-8283. Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-8283. PacificCenter.org.

Whipped: QTPOC Recipes for Love, Sex, & Oakland Mangos with Chili Oakland theater, spoken word, dance, [illegible] drag, and video. Feb. 12-13, 8 p.m., $8-$12. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Black House Quiz Teen [illegible] Tuesdays, 9 p.m., free. Barkett's, 2271 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-647-1790. [illegible]

Brainteaser Trivia Quiz Mondays, 8:30 p.m., free. Maggie McGarry's, 1353 Grant Ave., San Francisco. 415-399-9020. [illegible]

[illegible] Everyone is [illegible] to [illegible] on a [illegible] topics, including [illegible] education, [illegible] laughter, and whatever [illegible] 510-[illegible] First and Third Tuesday of every month, 7-9 p.m., free. Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 510-848-0237. JCCEB.org.

Drinking Liberally Political discussion group. [illegible] every month, [illegible] First Sunday of every month, 6-8 p.m. First Sunday of every month, [illegible] First Wednesday of every month, 6-8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31, free. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland. [illegible]

In the Mix: [illegible] [illegible] Feb. 12, 7:30-11 p.m., $15. Rhythmix Cultural Works, 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060. Rhythmix.org.

Know-itall Trivia Night hosted by Justin & [illegible] Mondays, 7:30-9:30 p.m., free. [illegible] Cafe, 6501 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-595-5344. [illegible]

Laugh Club Medical research has proven that laughter is good for you, so loosen up for a half-hour laugh session. Tuesdays, [illegible] a.m., $3 facility use fee for

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residents, $8 for nonresidents. 925-[illegible] San Ramon Senior Center, 9300 Alcosta Blvd., San Ramon.

The Living Philosophers Group A [illegible] discussion group. Fridays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. [illegible] North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Ave., Berkeley. 510-981-5190.

Mardi Gras Party for Single Professionals Mardi Gras party with mixer games, prizes, light appetizers, and party beads. Sponsored by the Society of Single Professionals. For info. call 415-[illegible] or visit TheParisHotline.com. Tue. Feb. 16, 7-10 p.m., $15. [illegible] Hotel, [illegible] Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-934-2000. [illegible]

Oakland Coffee Club Monthly brunch, featuring guest speakers, live music, activities, coffee, and croissants. Second Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-noon, free. 510-[illegible] Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-654-0123.

Oakland Interfaith [illegible] Mondays, 7-9:30 p.m., free. [illegible] Community Church, 3300 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-531-5411. [illegible]

Pub Quiz [illegible] Third Tuesday of every month, 7:30-9:15 p.m., free. Oakland Lounge, 2000 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-548-2080. TheMagnoliaLounge.com.

Singing [illegible] by UC Berkeley [illegible] Offered within a one-mile radius of UC Berkeley campus. To [illegible] call 510-[illegible] or visit UChoral[illegible] Feb. 13-14, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., $20-$30. UC Berkeley, Telegraph Ave. at Bancroft Way, Berkeley.

Valentine's Day [illegible] [illegible] singing from a $20 gift certificate to Caffe Strada or $200 [illegible] Sun. Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m., $50. House on Telegraph, 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. [illegible]

[illegible] Socrates Club A [illegible] discussion group. Every other Wednesday, 5:30 p.m. [illegible] Philosopher.org. Caffe La Scala, 1505 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-935-7779.

Weekly Sing-Along Led by Dale Allen [illegible] Free drop-in, all ages, no experience necessary. Wednesdays, 4:30-6 p.m., Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-526-3720. AClibrary.org.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

Aikido classes For info, visit Aikido[illegible] Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Mondays, 7 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31, $40/mo for 2 classes per week; $29/mo for one class per week. [illegible] Center, 1366 Oakland Ave., Berkeley. 510-981-6690.

East Bay [illegible] [illegible] Association Oakland [illegible] games of ultimate frisbee at Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex and San Pablo Park

(2800 Mabel St., Berkeley). For info, visit [illegible] Tuesdays, Thursdays, 7-11 p.m. Continues through Feb. 25, $50. Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex, 400 Gilman St., Berkeley.

Lunchtime [illegible] Gym Special [illegible] Gym, 4444 East Ave., Livermore [illegible] for a lunchtime special [illegible] a 20-visit pass, or $2.50 per visit. Info: 925-373-5721. Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Midnight Soccer Games Second and Fourth Saturday of every month, 11:45 p.m., free. [illegible] Arbor Park, MacArthur Blvd., Oakland.

[illegible] Weekly Bike Ride [illegible] mile ride up Tunnel Road and through the Berkeley Hills. Wednesdays, 5 p.m., free. Golden Gate [illegible] Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-595-5344. [illegible]

[illegible] Mondays, 10 p.m., $1.50 per game. Albany Bowl, 540 San Pablo Ave., Albany. 510-526-8818. AlbanyBowl.biz.

Busty Bindings Ski Club Weekly Meeting Recreational skiers, snowboarders, and other snow buffs welcome. Year-round activities include waterskiing, softball, tennis, golf and more. Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. BustyBindings.com. The Grasshopper Restaurant, [illegible] Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-937-1270.

San Francisco Frontrunners A 1-6 mile run starting to Stow Lake together with the rest of the LGBT community and friends. Saturdays, 9 a.m., free. SFFrontrunners.org. Golden Gate Park, JFK along Lake Drive, San Francisco.

Wandering the World: Essential Tips for Travelers With Beth Whitman, author of travel guides Wanderlust and Careful and [illegible] Fri. Feb. 26, 7:30-8:30 p.m., free. REI [illegible] 1338 San Pablo Ave., [illegible] 510-527-4140. REI.com.

SPORTS SPECTATOR

Golden State Warriors vs. Los Angeles Clippers NBA basketball. Wed. Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m., $10-$250. 1-888-GSW-HOOP. Warriors.com. ORACLE Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121.

Golden State Warriors vs. Sacramento Kings NBA basketball. Wed. Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m., $10-$250. 1-888-GSW-HOOP. Warriors.com. ORACLE Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121.

UC Berkeley Men's Basketball vs. Washington at Haas Pavilion, UC Berkeley campus. Thu. Feb. 11, 8 p.m., $10-$82. 800-GO-BEARS. calbears.collegesports.com/. Haas Pavilion, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-3277.

UC Berkeley Men's Basketball vs. Washington State at Haas Pavilion, UC Berkeley campus. Sat. Feb. 13, 1 p.m., $10-$82. 800-GO-BEARS. calbears.collegesports.com/. Haas Pavilion, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-3277. ●

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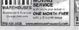
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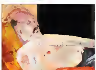

Detail of Julia Shirar's Asleep

Global Cooling

Julia Shirar satirizes acedia, sloth, and inertia

"Here it is the middle of August and the coldest day of the year. It's simply freezing. The dogs are sticking to the sidewalks!" So complains Sabina, the housemaid in *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Thornton Wilder's surreal 1942 comedy about mankind's heroism and folly as embodied by the immortal family of George (inventor of the wheel, lever, and multiplication tables) and Maggie (inventor of sewing and cooking) Antrobus, married 5,000 years, of Excelsior, New Jersey. A new ice age is heading south from Canada, refugees like Moses and the Muses are at the door, and the family pets, mammoth and dinosaur, huddle by the fire.

Julia Shirar, painter, teacher, and sound artist (*Lost in Translation*, *The Squid and the Whale*, and the historical document *Galaxy Quest*), is concerned about global warming and other challenges to Wilder's Ancient and Honorable Order of Mammals, Subdivision Humans. The three satirical paintings dominating her installation, ***Wrath Is Come*** (which includes drawings and sculptures), nod to her Southern Baptist upbringing, with its "late night flicks about Armageddon ... with hooded men on horses beheading ... sinners" and admonitions from Revelations ("For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"), but she is interested in the human comedy and finds irresolution, entropy, and dolce misanthropy. The three large portraits present figures drawn in an expressionist style reminiscent of Alice Neel, but the subjects, "armatures for [her] projections," seem psychologically absent. "Bunny" sits in an armchair smoking a cigarette, nude but for a swatch of cloth, a pair of anklets, and a wimple-like rabbit-eared headpiece; the shirtless, rectangular-headed middle-aged man in "Asleep" is no less inert; "Pumpkin (Waiting for Frogs)" is a ceiling's-eye view of a naked man on a bedspread, his eyes and saluting penis focused on something outside the frame, while a Freudian pumpkin rests next to his crotch. Shirar: "I think it is too late (not to mention egotistical, really) to pretend that these portraits are somehow a warning. They are an observation of the status quo during apocalypse-lite ... we go to work, we have children ... we watch ... television ... we recycle, plant gardens, [and] compost" but "Rome is burning and we are all playing our fiddles." (Or maybe this is all just a bad dream, like that *Twilight Zone* episode about the earth falling into the sun.) Sabina again: "We're all human; who isn't?" Chill. *Wrath Is Come* runs through February 20 at **Rowan Morrison Gallery** (330 40th St., Oakland). 510-384-5344 or RowanMorrison.com.

— *DeWitt Cheng*

To share this story go to: ebx.ly/wrath

ART GALLERIES

Actual Café: Getting There Photography by Christopher Hill. Featuring made-to-order arm warmers by 11 Spoke Sister. Through Feb. 28, free. 6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-735-6608. ActualCafe.com.

Addison Street Windows Gallery, Berkeley: Found Object Art Through Feb. 28. 2018 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-981-1546.

Bedford Gallery, Body Painters: Drawings, Paintings, Prints, and Tapestries by Squeak Carnwath, Hung Liu, and Inez Storer Survey of works by important Bay Area artists. Feb. 18-Apr. 11. 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-295-1417. BedfordGallery.org.

Berkeley Art Center, Process & Place: The Transformative Potential of Artist Residencies Featuring work by local artists Amy Berk, Edith Hillinger, Debora Bone, Anna Lambert, Mary Curtis Ratcliff, and Elizabeth Sher, who all attended the same residency program in New Zealand. Through March 28, free. 1275 Walnut St. (in Live Oak Park), Berkeley. 510-644-6893. BerkeleyArtCenter.org.

The Berkeley Art House and Gallery Center: Through Gunter Photos Featuring photographs by William Hagwood. Through Feb. 28. 2905 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley.

Frank Bette Center for the Arts, Frank Bette Reading Benefits Jewelry-making workshop. Sat., Feb. 13, 12-5 p.m. 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Blankspace, Surplus/Anywhere A late exhibition of new work by Stuart Putman. Through March 14. **For Sale: Artists' Frames for Sale** Featuring work by [illegible] Sat. [illegible] Val Garner, Ann Grey, Helena Keeffe, Crystal Kovacs, Thomasin Ramos, [illegible] Bartholomew, [illegible] Fisherman, Leah Rosenberg, Jeremiah Toser, Alan Whitehead, and Shoko Yamamoto. Through March 31. 6608 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville. 510-547-6086. BlankspaceGallery.com.

Cal State East Bay Arts and Education Building, Annual Art Faculty Exhibition Featuring work by [illegible], Jennifer Brazelton, [illegible] Graham, [illegible], Michael Henninger, Bryan Biggers, [illegible], Scott Hopkins, [illegible], [illegible], Lee Levine, Mark Levy, [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], Lisa Solomon, [illegible], [illegible], and Sharon Wadehouse. Through Feb. 25. 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward. 510-885-3056.

Chandra Cerrito Contemporary, A Thousand Ways to Kiss the Ground Installations and 30 drawings by Mari Andrews and Wendi Wing, incorporating found and man-made materials. Through March 20, free. 25 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-817-1537. ChandraCerrito.com.

The Compound, La-Lectra: Aislan by Barbara Kilbarth & Marie Rolfe Closing tea: Sunday, March 14th, 3-6 p.m. Through March 14. 6604 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-655-9000. TheCompoundGallery.com.

Crown Engine Studio & Gallery, Post Joe Wondervich Featuring artist [illegible] photographs. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] paintings. Fri., Feb. 12, 7-10 p.m., free. 499 Embarcadero, Oakland. 510-839-1055. CrucialEngine.org.

Crown Point Press, The Figure: A Group Exhibition Featuring work by Chris Ofili, Nathan Oliveira, Amy Sillman, Edgar Bryan, [illegible], [illegible] Clemente, June Felter, Eric Fischl, [illegible], Alex Katz, [illegible] Marden, Markus Raetz, David Salle, Wayne Thiebaud, and William T. Wiley. Through Feb. 27, free. 20 Hawthorne St., San Francisco. 415-974-6273. CrownPoint.com.

David Brower Center, The Lake Project: Photos by David Maisel Feb. 10-May 21. 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley.

EBMUD Gallery, Colby Oakland Reflections. Photography exhibit. Through March 18, free. 375 11th St., Oakland. 510-287-1360.

Expressions Gallery, The Wanderers Featuring work by Sam [illegible]. Opening reception Sat., Feb. 13, 6-9 p.m. Feb. 13-April 10. 2035 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-644-4930. ExpressionsGallery.org.

Hayward Shuster Gallery, Winter Members Show Photography, paintings, ceramics, sculpture, greeting cards, decorative gifts, and jewelry. Feb. 13-May 1, free. 22654 Main St., Hayward. 510-538-2787. HaywardArts.org.

Humane Gallery of Art Gallery, [illegible] Satellite show of "The Art of Living Books," featuring work by Abba Silvia [illegible] and [illegible]. Through March 10. 5301 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. [illegible]

Johansson Projects, Article II Featuring works by David Schubert and Kristine Lewis. Through March 20, free. 2300 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-9140. JohanssonProjects.com.

Joyce Gordon Gallery, For Colored Girls Only: A Celebration of Women All female-attended and performance salon, featuring music, dance, monologues, and readings. Feb. 12-March 29. [illegible] for performances. 406 14th St., Oakland. 510-465-8928. JoyceGordonGallery.com.

Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden: Metropo & Memory Paintings by Dave McCloud. Through March 2. 1223 Park St., Alameda. 510-865-2385. JuliesTea.com.

K Gallery, Seeing Red: Explorations on the Other Side of Love Wall paintings, drawings, photographs, books, and hand-made Valentines by Amal Hasan, Jan Erion, Jan Manzo, Bernard Fisher, Calvin Chapman, [illegible], [illegible] Wallace, [illegible], [illegible] Metallo, and Cynthia Rauschenberg. Fri., Feb. 12, 6-8 p.m., free. 2512 [illegible], Alameda. 510-415-5660. Whytech.org.

Kala Art Institute, Moose House Britain and The Fixed Mirrors Multi-media installation by Helen Maps [illegible] and Hossein Abdoos. Through Feb. 20. 1060 Heinz Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-2977. Kala.org.

Mercury 20 Gallery, Plugged In, 1978-2008 Works by Dave [illegible]. Through Feb. 27, free. **Don't Look Back:** Sculpture, painting, and mixed media by Margaret Stanley, Kathleen King, Jill McIntosh, and J. Charles [illegible]. Through Feb. 27, free. **Works on Paper** Featuring work by Jo Ann Biagini, Chris Fiebing, Pamela Gillespie, Maya Kabat, Jamie Morgan, Laura van Duren, Anna Vaughan, and Joan Weiss. Through Feb. 27, free. 25 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-444-1285. Mercury20.com.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Offices: Paintings from Near and Far Paintings by Susanna Dorkey. Through April 30, free. 101 8th St., Oakland. 510-464-7700.

NIAD Art Center: Animals Everywhere Group exhibition features paintings inspired by the animal kingdom. Through March 20, free. 551 23rd St., Richmond. 510-620-0290. NIADart.org.

Oakopolis Women's Center: The World Around Inside Out Photography exhibit featuring work by [illegible] and [illegible]. Artist-in-Residence reception March 8, 1-10 p.m. Through March 15, free. 111 25th St., Oakland.

Photolab Gallery, Ordinary Oakland and Beautiful Portraits [illegible] Photographs present black & white and color photographs. Through Feb. 21, free. 2235 Fifth St., Berkeley. 510-644-1400. PhotolabGallery.com. [illegible]

Pro Arts Gallery, [illegible]: Into The @ Pro Arts Through Feb. 20. 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. (510) 763-4361.

Rayko Photography, [illegible] Photographs exhibition by Lucia [illegible], featuring selections from her projects "[illegible]" and "Memories of [illegible]." Through Feb. 21. 428 Third St., San Francisco. 415-495-3773. RaykoPhoto.com.

Royal NoneSuch Gallery, Lending Library Group exhibition curated by Brian [illegible], featuring books and materials from Anthony [illegible], Lydia Greer, [illegible], Trevor Paglen, Mat [illegible], [illegible], Shannon Taylor, and Amanda [illegible]. Through March 5, free. 4231 Telegraph Ave., Oakland.

Ground Floor Tattoo/SAF Gallery, Karen [illegible]: Solo Show Through March 26. 1728 University Ave., Berkeley. 510-[illegible].

Sight Seminar, [illegible] Views: New Work by [illegible] Unveiling his most recent [illegible] installment. Opening reception Sat., Feb. 13, 1-10 p.m. Feb. 13-March 6, free. 5668 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. SightSchool.com.

Slate Gallery, [illegible], Expression and [illegible] New work by Lisa [illegible] and [illegible]. Through Feb. 27, free. 4770 Telegraph Ave., Oakland.

Smokin' Lounge, The Art of Hip Hop: [illegible] Thai and [illegible] [illegible] Series of paintings by up-and-coming artists, depicting [illegible]. Through Feb. 14. 4727 Telegraph Ave., Oakland.

Space Monkey, Crystal [illegible]: Bright [illegible] Painting installation. Through Feb. 27, free. 6620 [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-268-8470.

[illegible] Studios [illegible] Gallery: [illegible] Installation by [illegible]. Through March 1, free. **Stack Up on Sale and More Pictures** [illegible] by [illegible]. Through March 18, free. **Esplanade and [illegible]** Video installation by Barry Anderson. Through March 20, free. 569 2nd St., Oakland. 510-839-2178. SwarmGallery.com.

Townsend Center, Craig Nagasawa Presenting painting, photography, and collage. Through May 7. 220 Stephens Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-643-9670. TownsendCenter.Berkeley.edu.

We Artspace: Body Mind Ground Ashley Chalmers, [illegible] Green, [illegible], and Erika Mehrian exhibit 2D and 3D work. Through Feb. 20, free. 268 40th St., Oakland. WeArtspace.com.

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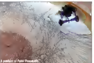
PICKS

Cynosure

A cynosure attracts all eyes, and this show at UC Berkeley art department's gallery subtitled "New Work from East Bay Galleries," may be just that, showcasing thirtysomething emerging local artists selected by three galleries in consultation with curator **Ann Vikram**. The range of creativity in style, medium, and even aesthetic philosophy is wide, so anyone seeking to catch up on The School of Oakland would do well to saunter across Bancroft Way from the Berkeley Art Museum Tuesday through Saturday between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Participating galleries include Alphonse Berber, [illegible], Blankspace, Chandra Cerrito, Haleh Johansson Projects, Pueblo Nuevo, Rowan Morrison, Swarm, Terminal 38, and Kraamwerk Gallery & Project Space. The project room has an sensitive light-and-sound piece, best left to the stout-hearted. *Cynosure* runs through February 20 at **Worth Ryder Gallery** (116 Kroeber Hall, UC Berkeley). 510-642-2582 or Art.Berkeley.edu. — *DeWitt Cheng*



A portrait of [illegible] sound-activated drawing apparatus.

DeWitt Cheng

Craig Nagasawa

Jasper Johns was fascinated by "a thing's not being what it was ... its becoming something other than what it is ... [the] moment in which one identifies a thing precisely and ... the slipping away of that moment." **Craig Nagasawa** similarly seeks "a liminal space ... suspended between memory and the present." Melding painting, photography, and collage, he creates in-between hybrid spaces that are overtly artificial. In the contemporary mode, yet sometimes verging on Romantic pantheism. In one almost operatically symbolic image, a shrouded figure reposes atop an altar-like bed at lake's edge beneath a pair of sheltering trees, the bedspread embroidered with tendrils. Another oil depicts a drawing/painting/photo of late afternoon flowers and grasses standing, intertwined by fencing, within the moonday landscape: scale and time synthesized and reconciled. *Craig Nagasawa* runs through May 7 at **Townsend Center** (220 Stephens Hall, UC Berkeley). 510-643-9670 or TownsendCenter.Berkeley.edu. — *D.C.*

MUSEUMS

Asian Art Museum, In a New Light Rare works from the museum's collection represent an introduction to the major [illegible] of Asia. Daily. 200 Larkin St., San Francisco. 415-581-3500.

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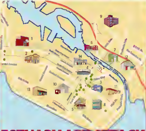

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Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Shanghai: Exhibit features 130 art works, including oil paintings, Shanghai deco furniture, apparel, film clips, revolutionary posters, and installations. Feb. 17-Sept. 5. 200 Larkin St., San Francisco. 415-668-8921.

Beat Museum: 3 Days with Allen Ginsberg: The museum's ongoing exhibit is a collection of never-before-seen photographs of poets Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and playwright Michael McClure by photographer Harold Adler. Daily. 540 Broadway, San Francisco. 1-800-537-6822. TheBeatMuseum.org.

Berkeley Art Museum. Assignment Shanghai: Photographs on the Eve of Revolution: Through June 21. 2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley. 510-642-0808. BAMPFA.berkeley.edu.

Blackhawk Museum. Alfa Romeo BAT Exhibition: Three aerodynamic concept automobiles from Alfa Romeo circa 1953-55, on display. Daily. 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Dr., Danville. 925-736-2280. BlackhawkMuseum.org.

Exploratorium. Traits of Life: A collection of exhibits and experiments examining the fundamental elements common to all living things. Daily. 3601 Lyon St., San Francisco. 415-561-0363. Exploratorium.edu.

Habitot Children's Museum. Shel Game: The traveling exhibition of Roger Goldenberg's art. *Shel Game, The Big Q...*, The Magical Planet. Daily. 2065 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-647-1111. Habitot.org.

Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology. From the Maker's Hand: From the permanent collection, a selection of works from China, Egypt, ancient Peru, plus locations in Africa, North America, and the Mediterranean. Daily. **Honoring Californian Cultures**: This "visible storage" exhibition comprises some 500 objects from the museum's collection of native California cultures. Daily. Kroeber Hall, Berkeley. 510-643-7648. HearstMuseum.berkeley.edu.

Institute of Mosaic Art. California Mosaic Artists: Celebrating Diversity through Mosaics: An ongoing group show. Daily. **Mainder Art: Pet Portraiture**: A celebration of pets, in mosaic. Daily. 3001 Chapman St., Oakland. 510-432-3499. InstituteofMosaicArt.com.

Lawrence Hall of Science. Moment on a Sphere (SOS): New permanent exhibit features an animated globe. Watch hurricanes form, tsunamis sweep across the oceans, and city lights glow around the planet. Daily. $8-$12. **Cosmic Dust Adult Evening Science Program**: With full access to exhibits, a cash bar, hors d'oeuvres, and a facilitated Historical Moose the newest exhibit, "RACE: Are We So Different?" Wed., Feb. 10, 7-10 p.m. $8-$10. Centennial Dr., Berkeley. 510-642-5132. LawrenceHallofScience.org.

Legion of Honor. Cartier and America: Jewelry exhibition featuring work by Cartier, who was known as "King of Jewelers" during the Belle Epoque. Through April 18. 34th Ave. and Clement St., San Francisco. 415-750-3600. LegionofHonor.org.

Judah L. Magnes Museum. Projections: Multimedia works from the museum's extensive collections of archival documentary and experimental films. Daily. **Memory Lab**: Interactive installation allows visitors to create digital family albums and exhibitions based on their own documents, photographs, and memories. Daily. 2911 Russell St., Berkeley. 510-549-6950. Magnes.org.

Peralta Hacienda Historical Park. Family Tours and Embroidery Activity: Museum open for tours. Starting Feb. 13. Second Saturday of every month, 2-4 p.m. Continues through Sept. 1. Free. 2465 34th Ave., Oakland. 510-532-9142. PeraltaHacienda.org.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Matisse and Beyond: The Painting and Sculpture Collection: Pieces from the museum's holdings, including work by Kahlo, Mondrian, Kiki, Rauschenberg, Rivera, Diebenkorn, et al. Daily. **Between Art and Life: The Contemporary Painting and Sculpture Collection**: Large-scale installations and multiple-work presentations from the museum's collections. Daily. **The Art of Design: The Architecture and Design Collection**: An ongoing presentation of works of architecture, graphic design, and industrial design. Daily. **Picturing Modernity: The Photography Collection**: From the museum's vast holdings, photos by Adams, Cunningham, Evans, Lange, Stieglitz, et al. Daily. 151 3rd St., San Francisco. 415-357-4000. SFMOMA.org.

USS Hornet Museum. TBM Avenger: WWII Avenger bomber restored by volunteers. Daily. **Nisei Soldiers Experience**: Photos and memorabilia telling the story of the nisei (second generation Japanese-American) troops who fought for the US in WWII. Daily. Pier 3, Alameda. 510-521-8448 ext. 243. USS-Hornet.org.

Zeum. Reality Check: A hands-on demo for kids that provides safe access to arts, media, and technology. Daily. 221 4th St., San Francisco. 415-777-2800. Zeum.org. ■

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Antigone Actors Ensemble of Berkeley presents Jean Anouilh's 1942 version of Sophocles' tragedy. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m. Thu., Feb. 18, 8 p.m. Continues through Feb. 20. $12-$15. Live Oak Theater, 1301 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-649-5999.

Sophisms [illegible] Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, 2 p.m., Sundays, 2 p.m., Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Saturdays, 7:30 p.m. Continues through Feb. 28. Campbell Theatre, 636 Ward St., Martinez. 925-798-1300.

[illegible] Diablo Theatre Company presents the Northern California premiere of a Broadway musical comedy with songs by John [illegible] and Fred Ebb. Starting Feb. 12. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 28. $28-$42. Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-943-7469. DLRCA.org.

Kaddish: The Legend of Mt. [illegible] Puppet performance inspired by Yiddish and [illegible]. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m. Continues through Feb. 28. $15-$40. The Jewish Theatre, 470 Florida St., San Francisco. 415-864-2547.

How We First Met Solo comedy show by [illegible]. Feb. 13-14, 8 p.m. $25-$40. [illegible] Theatre, 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. 4[illegible]-392-4400.

On the Periphery of Love Featuring *[illegible]* by [illegible], *[illegible]* by [illegible], dance in bed and ends in bed but differently by [illegible] and *[illegible]* by [illegible]. Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m., Sun., Feb. 14, 7 p.m. $15-$25. StageWerx Theatre, 533 Sutter St., San Francisco. StageWerx.org.

Over the River Eric [illegible] directs this comedy about a family living in Buffalo, New York during the 1990s. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m. Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 28. $11-$18. Contra Costa Civic Theatre, 951 Pomona Ave., El Cerrito. 510-524-9132. CCCT.org.

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead [illegible] directs Tom Stoppard's contemporized absurd version of *Hamlet*. Thursdays-Saturdays, 7:30 p.m. Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 14. $20-$32. Marion E. Greene Black Box Theatre, 5[illegible] 9th St., Oakland.

Sylvia's Advice on How to Age Gracefully on the Planet Ozone StageBridge Theatre production featuring an intergenerational cast. Call 510-444-4755 for more info. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 21. $15-$25. The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-6500. ShotgunPlayers.org.

The Syringa Tree Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Sundays, 2:30 p.m., Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., Sat., Feb. 27, 2:30 p.m. Continues through Feb. 27. Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-943-7469. DLRCA.org.

Vagina Monologues East Bay 2010 Jamie Shaw directs a cast from Alpine Belly Dance Studio, Oakland [illegible], and the Environmental Traveling Companions. Thu., Feb. 11, 8 p.m. $10. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

The Vagina Monologues Special benefit performance of Eve Ensler's play. Proceeds of the show go to the Panzi Hospital of [illegible], which treats victims of sexual [illegible] in the Congo. Fridays, 7 p.m. Continues through Feb. 12. $6, $12. Florence Schwimley Little Theater, 1920 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-644-6863. BerkeleyHigh.org.

DANCE-PERFORMANCE

An [illegible] of North Indian Classical Dance Kathak Solo featuring [illegible] with [illegible] on tabla and [illegible]. Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m. $10. [illegible] Center, 729 Heinz Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-2005. [illegible]

Mills [illegible] Dance [illegible] Sundays, 5:30 p.m. Continues through Feb. 17. free. Mills College Art Museum, 5000 MacArthur Blvd., [illegible]. 510-430-2164.

LIVE VARIETY

Dark Valentine a Pop Erotic Psychedelic Extravaganza With [illegible], short films, sex-toy giveaways, [illegible] performances based on bad ex-[illegible]. "Worst Ex Ever" bad "Worst Sex Ever" [illegible], and the dance by the Notorious Sex Ed Squad. [illegible] Sat., Feb. 13, 8 p.m. $12. [illegible] Saloon, 911 Second St., [illegible]. 510-465-8607.

Valentine's Day Rocky Horror Barely Legal Productions presents a special Valentine's day edition of *Rocky Horror* with a lingerie [illegible], and a pre-show performance by the Crown Pleasers. Sat., Feb. 13, 11:59 p.m. $10. Grand Lake Theatre, 3200 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-452-3556. RenaissanceRialto.com.

COMEDY

Gary Conrad: Master Hypnotist Through Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. $15-$20. Tommy T's Comedy & Steakhouse, 5104 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-227-1800.

Mike Epps Sun., Feb. 14, 7 p.m. $59.75-$75. Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland. 510-465-6400. ParamountTheatre.com.

Tuesday Comedy Night at the Layover Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m. Continues through June 1. free. Layover Music Bar & Lounge, 1517 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-834-1517. OaklandLayover.com.

Upright Citizens Brigade Touring Company Fri., Feb. 12, 8 p.m. $14-$18. Pan Theater, 2130 Broadway Ave., Oakland. 415-261-1645. PanTheater.com. ●

PICKS

The Bright River

Here's a past-lives-as-a-fire juggler, theologian, Chinese folklorist, storyteller and flautist, Tim Barsky managed to lump all his skills into a form he calls "urban circus arts." It's an apt description for his new show ***The Bright River: A Mass Transit Tour of the Afterlife*** which transforms an old allegory from Dante into a hip, lively, antiwar spread. An actor-less production, *Bright River* privileges sound over form. Its current iteration features beatboxer Carlos Aguirre (aka Infinite), jazz drummer Kevin Carnes, and cellist Alex Kelly, with Barsky playing a slew of woodwinds (he is a renowned practitioner of "flute beatboxing") and delivering his travelogue in spoken word cadence. The musicians not only create atmosphere, but also advance the story: At one point, Aguirre sets out an entire "conference of birds" using his body as an instrument. "Transit" is not so much a theme as an aural effect, conveyed through the use of scrap metal percussion and electronics. It accords with a kettle, industrial landscape designed by Melpomene Katakalos, and with Barsky's idea of using trains as a metaphor for purgatory. For those who caught the group's December performance at Climate Theater, this new stage production is more dynamic and dramatic — aerial instead of [illegible]. Directed by Jessica Heidt. Through February 20 at **Brava Theater Center** (2781 24th St., San Francisco). $17-$35. Brava.org. — *Rachel Swan*

Coming Home

Like [illegible] Berg, [illegible] contemporary playwright Athol Fugard has a knack for pressure-cooker dramas in which everything leads up to the moment of "too late." More importantly, his plays always shoulder the weight of history — specifically that of his South African homeland. Fugard's latest, ***Coming Home***, tells the story of Veronica (Roslyn Ruff), a small-town woman who sets out for the big city (Cape Town) but fails to improve her lot. Veronica returns to her village with a young son, a pernicious secret, and a sack of dead dreams, but finds solace in an old friend, Alfred (Thomas Silcott). Under the direction of Gordon Edelstein, this production wrings all the juice out of Fugard's writing. Ruff and Silcott stretch out the dialogue and use their bodies to reveal big things with small gestures. Ruff is particularly forceful. She starts off a bumptious man-loser and over the course of two hours (or five years, in the timeline of the play), she crumples. Eugene Lee's shantytown set — complete with its windmill and vegetable patch — creates a space of lost innocence for Veronica. Indeed, the word "home" has many implications. Through Feb. 28 at **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** (2025 Addison St., Berkeley). $13.50-$71. BerkeleyRep.org. — *R.S.*

The First Grade

It's [illegible] difficult to believe that first grade teachers have a life outside the classroom, and Sydney does nothing to undermine the stereotype. Played by Julia Brothers in Joel Drake Johnson's new drama (directed by Tom Ross at Aurora Theatre), Sydney is a dowdy, prune-faced matron with a sweet, neu[illegible] personality. She attempts to apply classroom management skills to all facets of life, from her alcoholic ex-husband, Nat (Warren David Keith) to her bitchy daughter, Angie (Rebecca Schweitzer). Such efforts create a lot of dysfunctional family spats, where Sydney is usually the hapless victim. Still, she maintains composure, dispensing vocabulary words and doling out cookies for good behavior. The writing is what anchors ***The First Grade***, even though Johnson's efforts to string in multiple themes (cultural dissonance, alienation, Sydney's menopause, mother/daughter relationships) make the plot get runny. Brothers handles her role like no other. She's the type of actress who can walk out between scenes and look utterly transformed — like she took a shower in the span of two seconds. Set design by Nina Ball includes a revolving wall that turns Sydney's classroom into her suburban home. That sense of continuity is remarkable. Through February 28 at **Aurora Theatre** (2081 Addison St., Berkeley). AuroraTheatre.org. — *R.S.*

Black Choreographers Festival

Dance is a vital force in African American culture, yet many artists experience a relative dearth of performance opportunities. In response, the **Black Choreographers Festival** offers three weekends of sc[illegible], master classes, and performances by young, up-and-coming, and noted African and African-American dance artists. Youth get the focus Friday-Sunday, Feb. 12-14, at **Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts** (1428 Alice St., Oakland) with a dance conference and summit (call for details; 510-283-7219). A family matinee featuring pre-professional youth dance companies wraps things up on Sunday (3 p.m., $5). **Dance Mission Theater** (3316 24th St., SF) hosts the following two weekends. **Reginald Ray-Savage**, **Raison Simpson** and others perform Feb. 19-[illegible] and a dozen burgeoning choreographers show their stuff at the **Next Wave Choreographers Showcase** Feb. 26-28 (Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun. 7 p.m., $10-$20.) For the master-class schedule, call Dance Mission at 415-826-4441. BCFHereAndNow.com or BrownPaperTickets.com. — *Claudia Bauer*

Love Everywhere

Valentine's [illegible] marks a [illegible] anniversary: On February 12, 2004, San Francisco began legally marrying same-sex couples, unleashing a flood of happiness and a baffling tug-of-war over marriage. Support the eventual triumph of love over law by joining the **Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project** *for Love Everywhere*, a weekend of choreographed and spontaneous dances, audience participation, and all-around joy staged in public spaces throughout San Francisco. Meant to raise awareness of the fight for marriage equality, the events culminate in two performances during Glide's Sunday services, which will feature a slideshow of wedding photos, plus live music with lyrics excerpted from wedding vows contributed by the public. Friday, Feb. 12, at **City Hall** (1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl., San Francisco), noon; Saturday, Feb. 13, **citywide** (see web site for times and locations); Sunday, Feb. 14, at **Glide Memorial Church** (330 Ellis St., SF), 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Free. LoveEverywhere.org. — *C.B.*

Queer Dance Festival

Queer [illegible] is [illegible] Cal State University East Bay this week, with events taking place all across campus. The theater department's salvo will be the **Queer Dance Festival** on Thursday, Feb. 11. Curated by Professor Eric Kupers, the interdepartmental production features student dancers and crew along with several of the Bay Area's finest artists, including **Dandelion Dancetheater**, **Nina Haft & Company**, **Navarrete x Kajiyama Dance Theater** and **Sean Dorsey**. Reflecting the diverse interests and talents of the artists, the bill includes dance styles from Argentine tango to modern and a range of music from traditional to experimental. Queer Dance hopes to become an annual must-see of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender-specific dance, and a remedy to the loss of San Francisco's Lesbian and Gay Dance Festival. At the school's **University Theatre** (25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward). 7:30 p.m., free. 510-885-3261 or Class. CSUEastBay.edu/theatre. — *C.B.*

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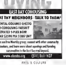

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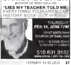

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THEATER

HAMLET UNPLUGGED

New TheaterFIRST production gives Tom Stoppard his due

By Rachel Swan

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.

You don't have to know *Hamlet* to understand the sense of doom that pervades *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. It's there in the title, after all. But it does help to know a bit of the backstory. For many of us, that's not a problem. We spent entire semesters of high school on the roles of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, debating the cause of Hamlet's madness and connecting it to larger themes in the play. We wrote AP English papers about mortality, predestination, and the guise of madness, analyzed the famous "To be or not to be" speech, and learned to empathize with the gloomy prince.

Ergo, the brilliance of Tom Stoppard's 1966 play, onstage through February 14 at TheatreFIRST's new home stage, the Marion E. Greene Theatre in Oakland. It's the inverse of *Hamlet*, retold by two courtiers whose role in the original play was to whisk Prince Hamlet from Denmark to England, where he would be executed. Hamlet turned the tables, and they wound up dying in his place. That's a pivotal detail, since it precipitates Hamlet's return to Denmark, where he finds the grave of his girlfriend, Ophelia, and sets a new chain of events in motion. Yet Shakespeare gave Rosencrantz and Guildenstern very few lines — by Act IV he had bigger fish to fry. Thus, it's easy to know *Hamlet* well and forget they ever existed.

That's what made Stoppard's idea so off-the-wall. Not only did he retell *Hamlet* from a witness' point-of-view, he used witnesses whose death is necessary. As Guildenstern puts it, "Our movement is contained within a larger one that carries us along inexorably." It takes a capable group of actors to convey that theme in a comprehensible way.

More importantly, it takes an adept Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Those lead parts are tricky because they have to come off as two smart, thinking men who nonetheless play a servile role. Rosencrantz (Kalli Jonsson) and Guildenstern (Michael Storm) open the play with a game of "spinning coins," in which they bet whether the coin will land heads or tails. After 90 consecutive "heads," a flustered Guildenstern starts pontificating on the nature of probability. As the play progresses, the significance of this scene becomes apparent. The characters' fate is sealed. But it's also crucial in establishing who these guys are. Storm plays Guildenstern as the headier, moodier character. He's a bit of a Hamlet in his own right, constantly presenting syllogisms, musing about death, and looking askance at people. Rosencrantz is the goofier, more literal of the two. Physically, they're perfect. They wear matching outfits (button-down shirts, cargo pants, and leather shoes) and often swap names — the joke being that they're so overlooked in the original text that they may as well be indistinguishable. But in this version, their looks complement one another. Storm grew a beard for the part, while Jonsson is clean-shaven and baby faced. It's the right mix of levity and gravitas.

Show Details
Through February 14 at the Marion E. Greene Theatre (531 19th St., Oakland). $15-$30. TheatreFIRST.com.

TheatreFIRST has a relatively bare-bones setup, which adds another dimension of difficulty, particularly for a play like this one. Not only does *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* take place in multiple locations, it also incorporates the action of three plays into its fold (the third is *The Murder of Gonzago*, the play-within-a-play that predicts everyone's deaths). Yet director Marybeth Cavanaugh and set designer Rick Ortenblad handled that rather well. Instead of building a proscenium stage, they painted a stage on the floor and placed three tiers of risers in the back. A large screen with clouds makes the whole set look ethereal. Meanwhile, it's big enough for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to run and shally about — and, granted, they do a lot of running and shallying.

It's also set up for multiple planes of action. While Rosencrantz and Guildenstern stand around and philosophize about *Prince Hamlet's* madness, *Hamlet* takes place all around them, as though it were happening in a parallel universe. We see Hamlet (Harold Pierce) and Ophelia (Siobhan Doherty, who doubles as the play's choreographer) fighting in pantomime. We hear him banishing her to a nunnery. We see Hamlet drag the corpse of Polonius (George Killingsworth) around the stage on a dolly, ignoring a stunned Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Aboard the ship — a set piece that's mostly implied, through clever use of lighting — Hamlet sits in a far corner, sunbathing or hiding beneath a large umbrella, while Rosencrantz and Guildenstern stand in the foreground. Minstrels and tragedians pop up through trap doors. With tactical blocking, Cavanaugh makes the whole thing look more complex than it actually is.

That's a huge feat for a scrappy theater company. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* is TheatreFIRST's second production in its new black box. It features a large ensemble, uses a complex plot device, and clocks in at about three hours. But even with all the tortuous dialogue between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (they spend a large portion of one scene playing "Questions"), the play appears to roll by at a fast clip. Storm, who also serves as the company's artistic director, obviously likes plays that demand a lot of the audience. His tastes are starting to pay dividends. ●

To share this story, go to: ebx.ly/ea/hamlet

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com

LECTURES & LIT

Hold the Mayo

Longtime coffee-shop waitresses are American heroes.

It's a classic American scene. Customer lopes into coffee shop, slumps into seat, sets elbows on Formica countertop. Waitress appears, wielding coffeepot. With a look sympathetic but practical, she asks, "What'll you have?"

Photographer **Candacy Taylor** traveled over 26,000 miles interviewing some sixty coffee-shop waitresses in 43 American cities. The result is *Counter Culture: The American Coffee Shop Waitress*, which she'll discuss at **Pegasus Books Downtown** (2349 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) on Thursday, February 11.

Candacy Taylor

Having waitressed while attending the California College for the Arts, Taylor chose to interview older women for the project "because I found the job physically and emotionally draining and couldn't imagine doing it for fifty years," as many of those featured in her book have done. "I wanted to know if the labor of the job was wearing them down. I wanted to know why they stayed. I assumed that they were working past retirement age because they couldn't afford not to work, but I was wrong. Several of the waitresses who were in their seventies said they had tried to retire but went back to work because they missed their favorite customers and the physical and mental exercise." One woman who had waitressed for 35 years told Taylor she wished she had another 35 years in which to do it all over again.

"I expected to meet women who felt overworked and underappreciated, but that's not what I found. All but a few said they loved their jobs and, if given the opportunity, they wouldn't do anything else," Taylor said. "I thought, How can this be true? Waitressing can be grueling — and where were all the complaints about carpal tunnel syndrome and varicose veins? Ironically, the physical and mental exercise that waitressing demands keeps them healthy instead of wearing them down, and most important, their regular customers made the job more enjoyable and profitable: they left better tips than strangers who were just passing through. Most of the career waitresses I interviewed were financially stable homeowners, drove newer cars, and many had sent their children to private schools. In general, these women were not struggling financially."

Shattering the Hollywood stereotype "of the struggling hash-slinger as an uneducated, poor woman with loose morals," the women Taylor met struck her as American heroes.

"Career waitresses do more than what's required," she said. "They warm the coffee cups of their favorite regular customers. They bring in special goodies from home like chocolate syrup for their regulars' ice cream and home-baked cookies."

One of the women featured in *Counter Culture* works at Trio's Restaurant in Dupont Circle, a predominantly gay neighborhood of Washington, DC. "She worked there in the early Eighties, when many of her customers were dying of AIDS," said Taylor. "For many of her gay customers who were ostracized by their families, she became their surrogate mother. When they were sick, she visited them in hospices and held their hands while they were dying. She has the ashes of one her favorite customers on her mantel at home." 7:30 p.m., free. PegasusBookstore.com

— *Anneli Rufus*

To share this story, go to: ebx.by/[illegible]

LECTURES

Bomb Power: The Modern Presidency and the National Security State Berkeley Arts & Letters and UC Berkeley's Institute of International Studies present a lecture by Garry Wills. Wed., Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m. $15, $20. First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. 510-849-2000.

The Cleanest Race Lecture on Kim Jong Il by B.R. Myers. Wed., Feb. 10, 4 p.m., free. Institute of East Asian Studies, 2223 Fulton St., Berkeley. 510-643-6538. IEAS.Berkeley.edu.

The East Bay Chapter of The Great War Society This month's topic is The Art & Music [illegible] in WWI. For info, call 510-521-7188. Sat., Feb. 13, 10:30 a.m., free. Albany Veteran's Memorial Building, 1325 Portland Ave., Albany.

Who Profits from the Israeli Occupation? Lecture by Dalit Baum. Thu., Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m., $5-$20. Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 1924 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-841-4824.

Black Scientist Exhibit Through Feb. 28. Oakland Public Library, Martin Luther King Jr. Branch, 6833 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-615-5728. OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] Author discusses his work. Tue., Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., free. [illegible] Books, 2468 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-2947.

Chris Cleave Discussing *Little Bee*. Tue., Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., $12-$15. First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. 510-[illegible]-2000.

Classics of [illegible] Valentine Book Group Third Monday of every month, 1 p.m., free. Barnes & Noble, 5604 Bay St., Emeryville. 510-547-0932.

Dave Eggers and the McSweeney's [illegible] Thu., Feb. 11, 8 p.m., free. Sibley Auditorium, Bechtel Engineering Center, Berkeley. 510-342-0000.

Dom Sagolla Discussing *140 Characters: A Style Guide for the Short Form*. Tue., Feb. 16, 7 p.m., free. Books Inc., Berkeley, 1760 4th St., Berkeley.

Jacqueline E. Luckett Discussing *Searching for Tina Turner*. Thu., Feb. 11, 7 p.m., free. Books Inc., Berkeley, 1760 4th St., Berkeley.

Lakeview Book Discussion Group Book [illegible] of every month, 6:45-7:45 p.m. Oakland Public Library, Lakeview Branch, 550 El Embarcadero, Oakland. 510-238-7344. OaklandLibrary.org.

Music of the World/La Palabra Mundial [illegible] Second Sunday of every month, 2-3:30 p.m., free. [illegible] Books, 3268 Adeline St., Berkeley.

Claire Cavanah Founder of Toys in Babeland discusses her new book, *Moregasm: Babeland's Guide to Mind-Blowing Sex*. Tue., Feb. 16, 7 p.m., free. [illegible], 5430 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-0[illegible].

[illegible] bookstore ever.

Shirley Stout Discussing *The [illegible] Connections to Happiness and Harmony*. Wed., Feb. 17, 7 p.m., free. Great Good Place for Books, 6120 LaSalle Ave., Oakland. 510-339-8210.

[illegible] & KPFA Valentine Evening with Maxine Hong Kingston Plus screenings of [illegible] Sun., Feb. 14, 7 p.m., $15. [illegible] Club, 2236 Center St., Berkeley. 510-848-1221. [illegible]Club.org.

Wednesday [illegible] Story Time with [illegible] Wednesdays. Continues through Feb. 28, free. Mrs. Dalloway's Literary and Garden Arts, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222. MrsDalloways.com.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Berkeley Community Media Media in Progress Screening Participants invited to bring a 5-10 minute clip of current projects. [illegible] Mon., Feb. 15, 6-8 p.m., free. Berkeley Community Media, 2239 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-848-2288.

SPOKEN WORD

From The Extremes With poet Joyce Lee and comedian [illegible] Studios. [illegible] Thu., Feb. 11, 8-9 p.m., Sun., Feb. 21, 8-9 p.m., Thu., March 18, 8-9 p.m. $8-$10. [illegible] Music & Arts, 3007 Maple Ave., Oakland. [illegible]Community.com/[illegible]MusicArts.

LITERARY EVENTS

Albany Library Evening Book Group [illegible] facilitates this group, which features novels based on "The American experience." Third Wednesday of every month, 1-8 p.m., free. Albany Library, 1248 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-526-3720. ACLibrary.org.

Autobiography and Memoir Book Discussion Group Third Wednesday of every month, 6:30 p.m., free. Hayward Public Library, 835 C St., Hayward. 510-293-8685. Library.hayward-ca.gov.

PICKS

Jacqueline E. Luckett

In **Jacqueline E. Luckett**'s debut novel *Searching for Tina Turner*, Lena Spencer is rejected by her overbearing, unsympathetic, uncooperative husband and two ungrateful kids. Inspired by rock-star Turner's autobiography, Lena sets out to create a new life of her own. The novel is set in Oakland, where Luckett lives. Meet her at **Books Inc.** (1760 4th St., Berkeley) on Thursday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m., free. BooksInc.com. — *Anneli Rufus*

Jonah Raskin

A year spent working in the fields, selling produce at farmers' markets, and meeting Sonoma's farmers, chefs, winemakers, laborers, and environmentalists taught **Jonah Raskin** a lot about what happens to food before it reaches our mouths. At **University Press Books** (2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley) on Thursday, Feb. 11, Raskin discusses his book *Field Days* with *Ecotopia* author **Ernest Callenbach**. 7 p.m., free. UniversityPressBooks.com. — *A.R.*

Charles Stein

In one of mythology's most dramatic abduction stories, Greek earth goddess Demeter's daughter Persephone is carried off to the underworld by the god Hades. Poet/translator **Charles Stein** examines that gripping tale in *Persephone Unveiled*. Meet the author of *The Secret of the Black Chrysanthemum* and other books at **Moe's Books** (2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley) on Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., free. MoesBooks.com. — *A.R.*

Chris Cleave

Chris Cleave

Two women who meet under unsettling circumstances on a Nigerian beach reunite when one of them seeks refuge in England. Penniless and traumatized, the refugee seeks out the only Briton she knows — posh editor Sarah — in **Chris Cleave**'s acclaimed novel *Little Bee*, which he discusses at the **First Congregational Church of Berkeley** (2345 Channing Way, Berkeley) on Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., $12-$15. BerkeleyArts.org. — *A.R.*

The Alameda Theatre & Cineplex Presents:

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BODY&SOUL

Power Points

Our chakras can block us or free us, says Shirley Desai

Shirley Desai

Even though her ancestors founded a Hindu temple in southern India and her grandfather authored a scholarly book about the Upanishads, **Shirley Desai** practiced no religion while growing up as a first-generation American.

Then, in her thirties, she went into business. "I was looking for a model to better understand and explain the emotional fabric of customers," Desai reflected. "In my personal life, I was learning about alternative medicine — ayurveda — and yoga to address migraine headaches." When her yoga teacher focused on poses corresponding with the seven power-points in the body known in Hinduism as chakras, Desai was intrigued.

"An epiphany came to me that the seven-chakras model could help to really explain the nature of customer emotions," she said. "I realized that as humans we had a dynamic and highly organized energy system for balancing our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors." Typically imagined as wheels of energy or light, chakras are said to become jammed through trauma or neglect. But the unique set of spiritual, psychological, and social issues associated with each one, Desai decided, were "fundamental building blocks of energy for human existence, consciousness, and happiness."

Fear and safety, for instance, rule the "root chakra," located at the base of the spine. "For most of us, the root chakra is what holds us back." After admitting our fears and forgiving ourselves for being afraid, Desai advises that we apply "mountaintop thinking" — serene, soul-nurturing, yet detached — to the situation, then "say 'no' to fear. ... When we open our fists and let go of fear, we open our minds," she writes in *The 7 Connections to Happiness and Harmony: Decision Making Made Easy with Yoga's 7 Chakras*, which she will discuss at **A Great Good Place for Books** (6120 La Salle Ave., Oakland) on Wednesday, February 17.

The chest's "heart chakra" resembles a train station: "As our thought trains roll in from the base chakras with all of their emotional baggage, they meet up with the intuition and higher thought patterns arriving from above." Understandably, this "seat of our soul and reservoir of memories" wields enormous power over our dealings with others. Desai recommends that we use its energy to help us "look for the soul qualities" of our adversaries.

"In just about every interaction, I think it's important to really connect to the person on a heart-to-heart level — to understand where the other person is coming from and learn how to laugh with the person," she said.

Progress — physical or mental, forward or backward — almost always results from decisions. Desai defines a good decision as one "that is thoughtful, confronts biases, and is appropriate for one's environment. I also define a good decision as one that is not made in haste or fear unless the situation really warrants it."

How to make those light-wheels spin? "I believe the ultimate clearing method is the divine method. When we are scared, we need to place this fear in the hands of a higher, divine source. And this divine source does not need to be tied to any specific religion or concept of God. The divine source is that spark we connect to in our hearts." 7 p.m., free. GreatGoodPlace.Indiebound.com

— *Anneli Rufus*

To share this story, go to: ebx.ly/p7/desai

HEALTH & WELLNESS

AIDS Project of the East Bay The Alameda County organization provides free HIV counseling and testing, support groups, care management services, assistance with benefits, transportation, and emergency housing, emergency food vouchers, and more. Volunteer opportunities available. Daily. AIDS Project of the East Bay, 1755 Broadway, Oakland. 510-663-7979. APEB.org.

Bay Area Stroller Striders Fitness program for moms: a total-body power walking, jogging, body toning, and strength and flexibility training into their baby stroller. Info: 866-635-6395 or StrollerStrides.net/oakbay. Fridays, 9:30 a.m., first class is free; $120 for a 10-class pass. Old Navy, 5835 Bay St., Emeryville.

[illegible] Kids: Oakland Elizabeth House A mobile health van where doctors provide immunizations, health education, checkups, blood pressure checks, and Head Start screenings entirely free to [illegible]. Onsite physicians are [illegible] and Gena Lewis. Please bring your child's yellow immunization card. Second Wednesday of every month, 5:30-7 p.m., 510-444-4135. Oakland Elizabeth House, 6423 Colby St., [illegible]. 510-658-1380. OakEHouse.org.

Mindfulness-Based Stress-Reduction Studies Eight week session course led by [illegible]. For info, visit StressReductionatWork.com. Thursdays, 7 p.m. Continues through March 25. $320. Acupressure Workshop, 1533 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley.

PERSONAL GROWTH

[illegible] Wed., Feb. 10, 7-10 p.m. [illegible] Center, 3091 [illegible] Pl., Oakland. 510-535-170[illegible]. [illegible].com.

Madly in Love With Me Celebration One-day transformational seminar & fiesta for women created by author Christine Arylo. Sat., Feb. 13, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. $169. Claremont Resort and Spa, 41 Tunnel Rd., Berkeley. 510-843-3000. ChristineArylo.com.

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

Brain Injury Life Goals Support Group Three different support groups [illegible] for brain injury survivors and their caregivers. Info: 510-204-3367. Second Thursday of every month, 5:30 p.m.; Fourth Thursday of every month, 5:30-6 p.m., free. Alta Bates Medical Center, Herrick Campus, Berkeley. 510-204-4444.

Fibromyalgia Support Group Sufferers and their [illegible] are invited to attend. Third Tuesday of every month, 12-2 p.m., free. 510-644-3273. Alta Bates Medical Center, Herrick Campus, Berkeley. 510-204-4444.

Living Judaism Eight session course: Modern Hebrew and meditation. Mondays, 6 p.m. Continues through Feb. 15. $140-$[illegible]. Chochmat HaLev, 2215 Prince St., Berkeley. 510-704-9687. Chochmat.org.

Piedmont Theology Seminars Guest speakers every week. Sundays, 10-11 a.m. Continues through May 31. free. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

Shir Hadash: Song of Group Prayers [illegible] Kabbalat Shabbat united musical liturgy of Sephardic, Mizrahi, and Ashkenazic traditions. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. free. Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 510-848-0237. JCCEB.org.

Wisdom Gatherings: A Psycho-Spiritual Teaching Call 925-685-3114 for more info. Wed., Feb. 10, 7:30-9 p.m., donations accepted. Conference Room, 43 Quail Court, Walnut Creek.

YOGA & BODYWORK

[illegible] Healing Yoga Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Continues through May 4. $2-$10. Piedmont Yoga Studio, 3966 Piedmont Ave., Oakland.

InterPlay as a Life Practice Cynthia Winton-Henry and other InterPlay leaders lead an ongoing class on moving, breathing, improvising, and playing. Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. $10-$25. InterPlayce, 2273 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-465-2797. InterPlay.org.

Yoga for Recovery from Addiction A free Hatha Flow class for people in 12-step recovery. For anyone who is recovering from addiction, or thinks maybe they should be. [illegible] Wednesdays, 3:30-5 p.m., Free. Square One Yoga Collective, 4336 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville. squareoneyoga.com.

PICKS

Womansong Circle

Having immersed himself in the work of 13th-century Sufi mystic Rumi for twenty-plus years and having put several of his poems to music, Dale Zola is the special guest artist at **Womansong Circle**, an evening of participatory singing for women hosted by folksinger/activist Betsy Rose at the **First Congregational Church of Berkeley** (2345 Channing Way, Berkeley) on Friday, Feb. 12. 7:15 p.m., $12-$15. BetsyRoseMusic.org — *Anneli Rufus*

Five Animal Play Qi Gong

Bouncing and hard stretching are among the exercises included in **Five Animal Play Qi Gong**, an old and rarely taught form of qi gong said to promote longevity. At the **Taoist Center** (3824 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland) on Saturday, Feb. 13, Alex Feng leads a class in this method. A martial artist, acupuncturist, and Doctor of Oriental Medicine, Feng is the son of Grand Master Wei Ren Feng. 8 a.m., $15. TheTaoistCenter.com — *A.R.*

"Speaking of Faith"

In an era of holy wars, fundamentalism, and intolerance, how can religion be discussed in ways that illuminate the best aspects of various faiths without igniting arguments and hatred? At the **Unitarian Universalist Church of Oakland** (685 14th St., Oakland) on Sunday, Feb. 14, Chaplain Jamie McReynolds leads a discussion titled **"Speaking of Faith: Why Religion Matters and How to Talk About It."** 10:30 a.m., donation requested. UUOakland.org — *A.R.*

Sakyong Jamgong Mipham Rinpoche.

Shambhala Day

Based on the traditional Tibetan New Year's celebration known as Losar, **Shambhala Day** at the **Berkeley Shambhala Meditation Center** (2288 Fulton St., Suite 202, Berkeley) on Sunday, Feb. 14, features chants, sitting meditation, a potluck reception, a Birthday Sadhana, vow ceremonies, and the broadcast of an address by Sakyong Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche, head of the Shambhala lineage. 8:30 a.m., free. Berkeley.Shambhala.org — *A.R.*

small business MONTHLY

Small Business Monthly is published by the *East Bay Express* and entirely dedicated to small business issues. Look for your copy in the *East Bay Express* on the last Wednesday of every month.

March Edition: On Newsstands Feb. 24

Did you miss the February issue? Read it online here:

www.eastbayexpress.com/ebx/small-business-monthly/SpecialReports

Employee Breaks Are a Growth Area in the Law
Running a Business With 20 CEOs

AQUARIUM AGE

LET THE GOOD VIBES ROLL

For the week of February 10-16, 2010

A powerful potential for joy permeates hearts and minds this week, and not just because Sunday is Valentine's Day. Several planetary patterns speak to lighter moods and jovial, kinder attitudes. So despite what seems to be a never-ending barrage of economic, environmental and political difficulties, it's actually possible to feel good. Anticipate a sincere desire to share the love — and not just romantic love. The week's good vibrations include all sorts of affections from sweethearts to sisters and brothers to mothers and fathers to co-workers, pets, neighbors, and even Facebook friends, known or unknown.

Venus, goddess of love and beauty, is at the heart of this benevolent current. Last week, a Venus/Neptune conjunction gave birth to altruistic longings, as it simultaneously increased a susceptibility to love and romance. This week, Venus moves out of her perfect union with Neptune, into what some might call a more perfect union with Jupiter. Venus enters Pisces on February 11, and as she does, she steps right into the willing and open arms of Jupiter, forming a conjunction that lasts until February 22. Venus loves love, and for the next two weeks, so do we. In Rome the goddess of love was known as Venus. But in her prior incarnation in Greece she was known as Aphrodite, the daughter of Uranus, who was born of the sea. Perhaps this is why Venus is so powerful in Pisces, a Water Sign, known for its deep wells of emotional sensitivity.

Jupiter represents expansion, and when it combines with any planet it amplifies and intensifies the qualities of that planet. When it joins with Venus, that intensification tends to manifest as warm-hearted, generous intentions toward others. Good manners and good form are also a component of a Venus/Jupiter conjunction. So don't be surprised if even the grumpiest among us seem polite and courteous. Also anticipate deep emotional surges. Venus is exalted in Pisces, an astrological standing that enhances her power to support intimacy. And while every moment may not be heart-stopping or life-changing (or culminate in marriage), don't let that stop you from freely expressing your feelings. Lasting connections aren't only about peak experiences.

Pisces represents the deep, unfathomable waters of the psyche. As Venus and Jupiter stir these waters during the next two weeks, some of what wells up is certain to feel like messages from the unconscious, personal and collective. Whether it is through dreams, meditation or other forms of direct contact, try to pay attention to your intuition. Keep pen and paper handy so you can jot down dreams or sketch ideas.

This week and next allow Venus and Jupiter to inspire creativity and insight. Immerse yourself in joyous activities, even if these activities don't look like fun to others. Honor your spirit by being true to yourself and let your example inspire others.

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon sign, read that too.

ARIES It's up to you to maintain an optimistic attitude. But if you do, you will be thrilled by how quickly your environment starts to shift. Be bold, productive and ready to make any necessary adjustments to keep the energy flowing in a positive direction.

TAURUS Graceful interactions with friends and associates not only bolster your spirit, but also inspire a desire to participate in community projects. Think about where your gifts might be best spent and then actualize your inspiration.

GEMINI While I'm not suggesting you will win an Academy Award, well-deserved recognition of your professional contributions would not be completely out of the blue. Whatever transpires, you will be pleased with the results.

CANCER Take a deep breath and feel your faith in yourself restored, but before you rush into the next drama, take a minute and allow yourself to adjust to this new phase. Don't worry, all the intensity will be waiting for you when you return.

LEO Dare I say it? I do. You're entering into a profitable financial period that has the potential to deliver tangible gains — but only if you keep your expectations realistic and are willing to do whatever it takes (within legal limits) to realize your goals.

VIRGO A quickening effect can be felt in all your relationships, including your relationship with yourself. Allow this new pace to settle in and you will feel yourself shift into a more expansive perspective that will improve all of your interactions.

LIBRA Be prepared for an increased workload, but also expect to be rewarded for your efforts. This isn't necessarily about a Wall Street bonus, but it is about being appreciated for your dedication.

SCORPIO Follow your creative urges and let nothing deter you from your goals. Seriously, this is a powerful creative time, and it's important to make a commitment to expressing yourself without hesitation.

SAGITTARIUS Your living situation, external as internal, is improving, and whether this shift is driven by luck or by your own effort is not important. Give yourself permission to feel happy about where and who you are.

CAPRICORN Don't hold back as you hold forth. Your wit and wisdom are greatly appreciated. What's more, as you share ideas and insights, you will inspire others to live with confidence and courage.

AQUARIUS You are on the threshold of a new financial phase that promises to be beneficial and abundant. But don't make commitments based on unrealistic optimism. Stay levelheaded and you'll make the right decisions.

PISCES Rather than spend one bit of energy resisting this vibrant time, share it with friends and family. And don't worry about being excessive; you already are, so why not just enjoy it? ●

To share this story, go to: ebx.ly/pc/aquarium

For More Info

Raffee Finn specializes in transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-937-9264, write P.O. Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquariumAge.com or e-mail Raffee@Aquarium-Age.com. Copyright © 2009 by Raffee Finn

Mind, Body, Spirit

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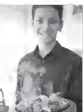

The Mixed Tandoori is terrific.

NEPALI FOOD FOR THE NEW YEAR

At Everest Cafe, celebrate the Year of the Iron Tiger with Himalayan specialties

By Matthew Stafford

With Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year and Carnaval and Mardi Gras all converging within the same few days of the mid-February calendar, it's no surprise that Losar, Himalayan New Year, can get lost in the shuffle. Pink champagne, firecrackers, samba dancers, and *laissez les bons temps rouler* are all well and good, but shouldn't we celebrate the Year of the Iron Tiger too? Of course we should, and if you don't happen to be a devout Hindu (or even if you are), the most festive way to cut loose is by wrapping your lips around some manic *thukpa* and other glories of the Nepali table.

That's where Berkeley's Everest Café comes in. Named for the tallest peak in Nepal — and, as a matter of fact, the world — the restaurant celebrates the cuisines of the old country and its neighbors, India and, to a lesser extent, China. Chef/owner Khagendra Dhungel opened the place in December, but his years of experience preparing the dishes of his native kitchen are evident in the food's tongue-tingling vitality, rich textures, and beautifully balanced flavors. The setting is as soothing and salubrious as the house cuisine: a cozy, friendly dining room decorated simply with flowers, wicker carpets and tapestries.

A fine way to kick off your New Year's celebration (beginning February 14, by the way) is with a platter of momo, the savory steamed dumplings that are to Nepal what *pelmeni* is to Russia and manti is to northern China. Everest's crescent-shaped *momo* wrap tender, delicate casings around robust fillings of minced spinach, cabbage, cilantro, scallions, cashews and mushrooms; the result was a mouth-filling treat that was even better with a spoonful of the accompanying brick-red tomato chutney. Or opt for *pakoda*, a light, crispy variation of Indian *pakora* with a minimum of grease and lots of natural vegetable content among the spiced batter and deep-fried coating. The *papad* (crisp wafers of peppery lentil flour) were nothing special, but another North Indian dish, samosa chaat, was irresistible. In the old country, chaat is another word for "snack plate," and here, several deep-fried potato-filled samosas were mashed together and draped with yogurt, chutney, chickpeas, tomato and cilantro: a rich, spicy platter of comfort food not unlike a subcontinental tamale pie.

Daal — pureed lentils — is Nepal's staple food, but Everest's *daal* soup was on the bland side despite its whispers of onion and cumin. A more effective response to the midwinter blues is a big bowl of *thukpa*, the sherpa's traditional festive fare during the celebration of Losar. Spicy, invigorating, and brimming with thick noodles, marinated chicken filets, carrots, broccoli, peppers, and cilantro, it's as hearty and comforting on a cold drizzly night as the great chicken noodle soups of legend.

Among the *tarkari* (vegetable curry) dishes on the menu is *Nnash ko tarkari*, a sweet, earthy stew of onions, peppers, tomatoes, and lots of crisp, cumin-laced okra that was so tasty and flawless it gives the vegetable a good name. Another terrific entrée is the mixed tandoor, which arrives at the table in a dramatic cloud of steam. Marinated and baked in a clay oven aglow with hot coals, the platter's chicken, lamb and jumbo prawns were smoky, juicy and perfectly tender, served on a colorful and thoroughly edible bed of red onion, purple cabbage, green pepper, broccoli flowerets, and shredded carrots. The Everest Biryani Special also takes the inclusive approach to mealtime, combining succulent chunks of lamb, chicken, and prawn with currants, cashews, carrots, cauliflower, lots of al dente basmati rice, and a bazaar's worth of spices. Khukura Ko Masu Ra Chyau (chicken with mushrooms) is a much simpler dish, but the tenderness of the meat, the sweetness of the mushrooms, and the subtlety of the spicing was a pleasant contrast to the fireworks of the other entrées.

The evening's simplest dish was goat curry: nothing but stewed meat with a hint of gaminess, the creamy, luscious texture of a good lamb shank, and a warm, spicy afterglow. To cushion all these rich and spicy flavors there's a *roti* studded with carrots and scallions, a delicate, rather flavorless crepe-like bread called *bakarr*, and six varieties of naan, the pillowy Indian flatbread, fresh from the tandoor oven. One was layered with melted cheese, another with mashed potatoes, green onion and cumin seeds; both were irresistible, especially with a dollop of the chunky, slightly lemony house mango chutney on top.

After all that sparkle and spice it's nice to balm the taste buds with a cool, soothing dessert, but Everest's meal-closers are entirely too pacifying. The house *kheer* (rice pudding) was watery and bland, with a squeeze of lemon and a lone cardamom pod providing only the barest hints of flavor. *Gulab jamun*, India's syrup-drenched deep-fried milk-powder balls, offered a bit of texture and not much else. Another Indian specialty, *ras malai*, was initially intriguing — thick chunks of tart *paneer* (farmer's cheese) served in a thick, sweet milk sauce — but the end result was chalky and unexciting.

Vegetarians will find plenty of tasty options on Everest's menu. More than one-third of the restaurant's appetizers and entrées are meat-free. Start with the *momo*, *samosa*, *pakode* or *papad*, a green salad, or a bowl of vegetable soup. Chow mein, *biryani* and *thukpa* are available in vegetarian-friendly renditions. Among the entrees are *tarkari* made with eggplant, okra, and vegetables of the season; tikka masalas of spinach and tofu; vegetable stews; a classic *saag paneer*; and wide-ranging preparations of potatoes, cauliflower, tomatoes, green peas, lentils, garbanzos, and mushrooms. To complement these are six varieties of naan bread as well as *roti*, pickles, and chutney.

Beverages include three of those pallid Indian lagers that go so well with spicy foods, plus a handful of wines and a few intriguing Tibetan beers. Two nonalcoholic drinks were especially tasty: a tall, cool glass of mango *lassi*, thick and creamy as a milkshake but not too sweet, and a hot, frothy Nepali chai with plenty of punch and a nicely balanced array of spices. Between them they pair perfectly with Everest's lush, invigorating, and absolutely celebratory cuisine. ●

To share this story, go to: ebx.ly/everest

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Everest Café
1645 Solano Ave., Berkeley
510-526-4913 or Everest-Cafe.com
Cash, all major credit cards
Hours: Mon-Sat 10:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m.
Sun 1-9:30 p.m.
Reservations accepted

Sample Menu

Samosa Chaat	$4
Chicken Thukpa	$7
Mixed Tandoor	$16
Goat Curry	$12
Okra and Onions	$9
Mango Lassi	$3

RESTAURANTS & CAFES

This guide only lists restaurants recommended by Express food writers. You can find complete reviews for all of these restaurants at EastBayExpress.com. Our print listings rotate regularly, as space allows. Our complete Dining Guide is available online, where it is searchable by neighborhood, cuisine, price and more. Price codes assume diners will order a main course and beverage, share appetizers and desserts, and tip adequately. $—up to $10 per person, $$—$10–$25, $$$—$25–$40, $$$$—more than $50.

ALAMEDA

Angelamia 1544 Webster St., Alameda 510-522-2220. (Italian) $$$
Sabores & Jonas Barbeque 1930 Main St., Alameda [illegible] 510-814-6149 (American) $$
Ole's Waffle Shop 1501 Park St., Alameda, 510-[illegible] (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $
Daruma Kitchen and 1519 Webster St., Alameda 510-521-9090. (Japanese) $
Pappo 2320 Central Ave., Alameda, 510-337-9100. (California Cuisine) $$$
Sandwich House 2412 Webb Ave., Alameda, 510-521-2466. (Deli) $
Speisekammer 2424 Lincoln Ave., Alameda 510-522-1300. (German/European) $$
Sushi King 1650 Park St., Alameda, 510-523-9888. (Japanese/Sushi) $$
Sweet Sushi 1428 Park St., Alameda, 510-865-1145. (Japanese/Sushi) $$

ALBANY KENSINGTON & BERKELEY SOLANO

O Berkeley on Adonit 1401 Solano Ave., Albany 510-528-1231. (California Cuisine/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$
Bui 1641 Solano Ave., Berkeley (510) 528-8578. (Vietnamese) $$
Cafe Raj [illegible] Solano Ave., Albany 510-524-5487. (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$
Cafolna 1300 Adonit Ave., Albany 510-526-0888. (Breakfast/Brunch/Cafe/Coffeehouse/Organic/Sustainable/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
The Ups Grill 1150 Solano Ave., Albany 510-525-3388. (Seafood) $$
Golden Village 1326 Solano Ave., Albany 510-525-2[illegible]65. (Chinese) $-$$
Christopher's Berkeley Fancy Cafe 1019 San Pablo Ave., Albany 510-526-1185. (Mexican/Southwestern) $-$$
Fatapple's 1520 Fairmount Ave., El Cerrito 510-526-3438. (Bakery/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $-$$
Ici 2948 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-665-6054. (Bakery/California Cuisine/Dessert/Ice Cream/Organic/Sustainable) $$
Jamaican's Organic Kitchen 1891 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-526-7886. (House Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $
Homemade 1411 Solano Ave., Albany 510-526-3723. (Taiwan) $$
Kirin 1767 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-524-1677. (Chinese) $$
Lao Thai Kitchen 1408 Solano Ave., Albany 510-559-3170. (Cambodian/Laotian/Southeast Asian/Southern/Soul Food/Thai/Burmese) $
Norte is Norte 825-831 San Pablo Ave., Albany [illegible] (French/Italian) $$$
Pont Marmitas 1500 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-525-1550. (French/Organic/Sustainable/California Cuisine) $$-$$$
Rotten Pair 3045 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-528-2375. (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$
Saffron Express 1007 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-558-8788. (Indian/Middle Eastern) $
Thep Phanom 977 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-525-7800. (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$
Shabash's Union 1755 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-525-8300. (Tapas/Small Plates/Vietnamese) $$
Berkeley's Chicago Pizza 1863 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-525-5850. (Pizza) $-$$

BERKELEY-DOWNTOWN

Amanda's 1122 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-548-2222. (American/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
Arinell 2119 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-841-4035. (Pizza) $
Bocket's 2271 Shattuck Ave., Japanese 510-841-1790. (American/English/Irish/Beer) $$
Brazil Fresh Squeeze Cafe 2161 University Ave., Berkeley 510-845-0363. (Food only/Deli/South American) $
ShopPlate 2020 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-3563. (Tibetan) $-$$
The Pourhouse 2415 Shattuck St., Berkeley 510-843-0370. (Eclectic/Fusion) $
Poplar Party House 2136 Oxford St., Berkeley, (510) 849-0549. (Indian/Pakistani) $
House Center Street at Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
Henry's Publick House & Grille 2600 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-868-4132. (California Cuisine) $$
Herbivore 2451 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-665-1675. (Vegetarian/Vegan) $-$$
International House 2299 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley 510-642-9490. (Eclectic/Fusion/Organic/Sustainable) $
Long Life Vegi House 2129 University Ave., Berkeley 510-845-6072. (Chinese/Organic/Sustainable/Seafood/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
Madelena International Sports Grill 2[illegible] University Ave., Berkeley 510-705-1450. (American/Brewpub) $$
Pie in the Sky 2124 Center St., Berkeley, 510-848-0548. (Pizza) $
Platano 2040 University Ave., Berkeley 510-704-0275. (Central American) $-$$
Rinran 1323 University Ave., Berkeley 510-841-7148. (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$
Pomegranate 1535 University Ave., Berkeley 510-666-5567. (Italian/Middle Eastern) $$
Sanuki Udon Ryowa 2000 University Ave., Berkeley 510-665-0867. (Japanese/Sushi) $
Taste of the Himalayas 1700 Shattuck Ave., Suite A, Berkeley 510-549-0985. (Indian/Pakistani) $$
Thai Delight Cuisine 1700 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-549-0611. (Organic/Sustainable/Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$
Top dog 2160 Center St., Berkeley 510-849-0176. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $
Shattuck Paradise 2016 University Ave., Berkeley 510-665-4760. (African) $$
Bistro Nikkos 1986 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 51[illegible]-549-9991 (Middle Eastern) $$
House 2[illegible] Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-841-9950. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Burgers/Sandwiches/American/Japanese/Fusion/Pakistani) $-$$$
Zaatar 1981 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-841-9981. (California Cuisine/Greek/Italian/Middle Eastern/Organic/Sustainable/Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates) $$-$$$

BERKELEY-NORTH

Chez Panisse 1517 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-548-5525 (downstairs)/510-548-5049 (cafe). (California Cuisine/French/Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $$$-$$$$
Gorzo 1788 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-0004. (Italian) $$$
Fatapple's 1346 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley 510-526-2260. (Bakery/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $-$$
Pianos Rose Street at Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley. (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
Gioia Pizzeria 1586 Hopkins St., Berkeley, 510-528-4692. (Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $
Grendle Cafe 1[illegible] Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-2233 (Breakfast/Brunch/Organic/Sustainable) $
Japanese Tea Court 1801 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-540-8888. (Chinese/Japanese/Vegan) $
Sweet Italian Bistro 1186 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-848-7190. (Italian) $$-$$$
Roman's Express 1323 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-521-5281. (Vegetarian/Vegan/American) $
Gecco Japonese 2003 S Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-540-4013. (Mexican) $
Saul's Restaurant and Delicatessen 1475 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-848-3354. (Deli/Kosher/Halal/Organic/Sustainable) $$
Top dog 1503 Hearst Ave., Berkeley 510-843-1241. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $

BERKELEY-SOUTH

Adagia 2700 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 510-647-2300. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$$
Cafe Intermezzo 2442 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-849-4592. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
Cafe Sportsman 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-849-3800. (South American) $$
Cheese Board 1504 Shattuck St., Berkeley 510-549-3183. (Bakery/Cafe/Coffeehouse) $-$$
Pinotique 2500 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-883-0187 (African/Ethiopian/Eritrean) $$
House Derby Street at Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
Homemade Cafe 2454 Sacramento St., Berkeley, 510-845-1940. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $
Manpuku 2977 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-3826. (Japanese/Sushi) $-$$
Rick & Ann's Restaurant and Catering 2922 Domingo Ave., Berkeley, 510-649-8538. (American/Breakfast/Brunch) $$
Smokehouse 3115 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-845-3640. (American) $
Top dog 2534 Durant Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-5967. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $
Wat Mongkolratanaram 1911 Russell St., Berkeley, 510-849-3419. (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

BERKELEY-WEST & EMERYVILLE

900 Grayson 900 Grayson St., Berkeley 510-704-9900. (California Cuisine) $$
Anchalee 1094-1096 Dwight Way, Berkeley 510-848-4015. (Thai/Anchalee) $$
The Bison Barbeque 1300 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-849-5140. (Bakery/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $
Cafe Rouge 904 Vine Ave., Berkeley 510-843-6500. (Bakery/California Cuisine/Dessert/Ice Cream/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$$
Cafe Clem 7700 Seventh St., Berkeley, 510-204-9903. (French) $
Cafe Fanny 1095 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-[illegible]-5441. (Cafe/Coffeehouse/California Cuisine/Brunch/Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $$
Cafe M 1791 Fourth St., Berkeley 510-638-4430. (American/Breakfast/Brunch) $$
Cafe Rouge 1782 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-525-1440. (California Cuisine/French/Organic/Sustainable) $$-$$$
Caffe Venezia (AVISON) 1799 University Ave., Berkeley 510-849-4681. (Italian) $$$
Charles Pobleano 1529 66th St., Emeryville, 510-923-0497. (Mexican) $$
High Noon 1453 Dwight Way, Berkeley 510-549-2320. (American/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$
Doyle Street Cafe 5515 Doyle St., Emeryville 510-547-3592. (Southern/Brunch/Diner) $
Everett & Jones Barbeque 1955 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley (510) 548-8261.

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RECENTLY REVIEWED

Fluvah Island Cafe

2007 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-704-4463. Kingston native Dan Edwards cooks authentic Jamaican fare such as salt-cod fritters, sorrel, curried goat, sautéed salted cod, escovitched fish, and sunny yellow ackee. The latter, Jamaica's national fruit, is related to the lychee but looks, feels, and tastes for all the world like scrambled eggs. Edwards makes most of these dishes based on his aunt's and grandmother's recipes. Experiments such as Rasta Pasta — a meatless standout featuring whole-wheat fettuccini in a thick, basil-scented soy-cream sauce worthy of any fancy restaurant in town — are his own inventions, as is his allspice-rich jerk marinade. Some dishes are Asian-inspired: famous JamAsian Stir Fry is a mountain of chewy and irresistibly smoky rice noodles. This and everything else here, including full $2.99 breakfasts featuring enormous berry-topped pancakes, comes in such generous portions at such bargain-basement prices that you almost wish you could pay more, just to be fair. $

Natures Express

1824 Euclid Ave., Berkeley 510-547-5331. From sturdy "black-bean-and-cheese" burritos to rice-[illegible] peanut butter "milk" shakes to slender, tender air-baked golden "fries" to ten different varieties of "burger," everything served in this pint-size vegan fast-food joint is not only meatless, but milkless, eggless, honeyless, and preservative-free. For a menu whose sixty-some-thing choices span breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks, agave-sweetened desserts, and snacks — and even includes a special section for kids — that's saying a lot. Sandwiches, wraps, salads, breakfast burritos, and other items made here with all-organic produce and no preservatives or chemical additives bring bright, pure flavors to the fast-food scene. Especially creative touches are turnip slaw, a tempeh Reuben sandwich, and a fishless "Hold the Tuna" sandwich whose mayo is chickpeas. $

Phat Matt's BBQ

3415 [illegible] Ave., Oakland, 510-879-7591. Tender, juicy, supple flesh — the prime attraction at this unpretentious rib joint. Texas-style beef brisket, North Carolina pulled pork, and a quarter-chicken doused in house-made barbecue sauce are almost creamy in texture, while the brick-red hot links snap, crackle, and spice up your insides. The chewy tri-tip, however, is rarely available. Side dishes are mostly unimpressive (exception: the wonderfully tangy potato salad), but don't skip the praline-like pecan pie or the blissful buttery peach cobbler. $$

Green Papaya

2011 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-843-1698. Berkeley's first vegetarian Thai restaurant is owned by the same family that owns TukTuk and Your Place. Occupying the space that formerly housed Sushi A'Beat, it wears a fresh new design that reflects its allegiance to the plant realm. It's one of those rare places in which you keep on ordering and keep on liking everything you try. The fried taro appetizer is a revelation, a creamy-starchy cutlet slab whose crisp, golden skin suggests a fried-chicken-potato-donut doughnut. Other standouts include the daikon patties, pineapple-gluten curry, and peanut-sauce tofu. Noodle dishes are a bit sparse, but maybe that's because most of the other dishes — especially the curries, which range from mild to three-star spicy — are so gigantic. $

I Squared

5401 College Ave., Oakland, 510-658-4400. Spare, sleek Rockridge storefront serves a brief menu of salads, kabobs, pastas, and other signature dishes out of the Iranian and Italian playbooks, all of them fresh, satisfying, and absolutely tasty. A few more Persian specialties would be welcome, but the delectable lamb and cinnamon cabbage wraps will do in a pinch. Get the tiramisu parfait for dessert. Impressive beer list. $$$

eVe

1960 University Ave., Berkeley 510-868-0735. Chefs/co-owners Christopher and Veronica Laramie met as students at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. They designed this little treasure box's sleek interior down to the Chulucanas pottery from Veronica's native Peru. And they created a constantly changing menu on which each dish costs $11. Its avant-garde aesthetic, throbbing trance music, and carefully chosen wine list, plus the fact that the chefs appear tableside to explain each dish, renders eVe not just a restaurant but a kind of theater/party/potlatch, in which it's all about the flavor combinations. A celery-root soup, for example, bears salsify shards, smoky sunken nuggets of Spanish chorizo, the reticent shaver of chestnuts and cranberries, and an aroma imparted by bay-leaf-tea foam. Even if you love what you've ordered, you might never have it here again, as the Laramies change their menu every few days. $$

R&C

(Barbecue) $$

Gochi 1919 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-524-1405 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

Barlo-Village 1020 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-542-9909 (Indian/Pakistani/Kosher/Halal) $

Jamaican Soul 2057 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-4063. (Caribbean) $

Jimmie Bean's 1290 Sixth St., Berkeley, 510-528-3435 (Breakfast/Brunch/California Comfort/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Bill's Bar-B-Que 2013 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-6668 (Barbecue) $-$$

Miyozo 1581 40th St., Emeryville, 510-923-0321 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

Picante 1328 Sixth St., Berkeley, 510-525-3121 (Mexican/Organic/Sustainable) $

Priya Indian Cuisine 2072 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-644-3077 (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

Sound's 3097 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville 510-547-9238 (Southern/Soul Food) $$

Hidden on the Bay 100 Hidden Dr., Berkeley, 510-540-8506 (American/Seafood) $$

Sketch 1809A Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-665-5650 (Dessert/Ice Cream) $

Vik's 726 Allston Way, Berkeley, 510-644-4412. (Indian/Pakistani/Tapas/Small Plates) $

CONCORD, MARTINEZ & PLEASANT HILL

Chopan Kabob 2690 Monument Blvd., Concord 925-689-5488. (Afghan/Persian) $

Bi's Bistro 1825 Salvio St., Concord, 925-825-5271 (Eastern European) $$

Taqueria Los Tres 2005 Monument Blvd. Suite 8, Concord, 925-682-2130 (Mexican) $

EL CERRITO, RICHMOND & NORTH

Best Burritos 11190 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, 510-526-8356 (Mexican) $

El Chileno 3748 San Pablo Dam Rd., El Sobrante 510-222-0087 (Italian/Peruvian/South American) $$

The Dead Fish 20050 San Pablo Ave., Crockett 510-787-3323 (American/Seafood) $$$-$$$$

Hidden City Cafe 109 Park Pl., Richmond 510-965-6748 (American/California) $$

Hotel Mac 50 Washington Avenue, Richmond 510-233-0576 (American) $$$

Kallenti 3815 San Pablo Dam Rd., El Sobrante 510-223-8015 (Central American) $

Kaeng Thai 11234 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito 510-232-9903 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$

Little Angie's 6105 Potrero Ave., El Cerrito, 510-232-8979 (Steak House) $$-$$$

Marylou's Homemade Delights 1572 Sycamore Ave., Suite E, Hercules 510-245-1760 (Hawaiian) $

Pho Hoa Thai 12860 San Pablo Ave., Richmond 510-235-1223 (Vietnamese) $-$$

Ristorante Due Rose 1596 Fitzgerald Dr., Pinole 510-223-5920 (Italian) $$

Saffron Thai Homemade 12230 San Pablo Ave., Richmond 510-232-1642 (Richmond Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$

Pablo Los Primos Parking lot at 550 23rd St., Richmond (Mexican) $

El Tapatio 901 23rd St., Richmond 510-215-0999 restaurant (Mexican) $

Taqueria La Bamba 12345 San Pablo Ave., Richmond 510-235-2288, (Central American/Mexican/Salvadoran) $

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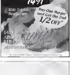
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FREMONT, NEWARK & UNION CITY

[illegible] 33535 Alvarado Niles Rd., Union City, 510-471-0387 (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

[illegible] Cafe 40828 Warm Springs Blvd., Fremont, 510-656-5488, (Chinese) $

[illegible] Restaurant 2009 Washington Blvd., Fremont, 510-659-9000, (Kosher/Halal/Middle Eastern) $-$$

Little Potato 1113 Decoto Rd., Union City, 510-487-8888 (Chinese) $

[illegible] Express 34420-G Fremont Blvd., Fremont, 510-608-0585, (Chinese) $

[illegible] and [illegible] 40391 Fremont Blvd., Fremont, 510-458-5812, (Bakery/Indian/Pakistani) $

Salang Pass 37150 Fremont Blvd., Fremont, 510-795-9200, (Afghan/Kosher/Halal/Middle Eastern) $$

HAYWARD & SAN LEANDRO

A Street Cafe 1213 A St., Hayward, 510-582-2558 (French) $$$

[illegible]'s Brown Bistro 20102 Brown Blvd., Hayward, 510-276-7355, (Italian) $-$$

[illegible] 517 A St., Oakland, 510-247-6428 (Italian) $$

[illegible] Jones Barbeque 296 A Street, Hayward, 510-581-3222, (Barbecue) $$

[illegible] 25036 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, 510-785-4327 (Chinese) $$

[illegible] Bar-B-Q Restaurant 22266 Mission Blvd., Hayward, 510-886-7787 (Barbecue/Korean) $$

The Hayward Brews 22811 Mission Blvd., Hayward, 510-538-5522 (American/Seafood/Steak House) $-$$

[illegible] 39-1 Restaurant 20018 Redwood Rd., Castro Valley, 510-889-0888, (Chinese) $

The [illegible] 1055 B St., Hayward, 510-538-5181 (American/Diner) $

Pal Pie Paradise 3522 Arden Rd., Hayward, 510-780-4354, (American) $

[illegible] Restaurant 464 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-535-9600 (Caribbean) $$

LAMORINDA

[illegible] Cafe 2 Theater Sq., Suite 105, Orinda, 925-254-5240 (Greek/Turkish/Middle Eastern) $

[illegible] 3422 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 925-283-7133 (Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] 20 Bryant Way, Orinda, 925-254-2315 (American/Steak House) $$-$$$

El [illegible] Cafe 3583 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 925-283-8381 (Mexican) $-$$

[illegible] Restaurant 1 Orinda Way, Orinda, 925-253-8852 (Chinese) $

[illegible] 3520 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 925-298-5000, (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $$-$$$

[illegible] 360 Park St., Moraga, 925-377-7882 (Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

[illegible] 3532 Plaza Way, Lafayette, 925-284-3330 (Italian/Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates) $$

OAKLAND-DOWNTOWN & JACK LONDON SQ.

[illegible] 499 9th St., Oakland, 510-251-8111, (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$

[illegible] 578 14th St., Oakland, 510-251-2752 (Organic/Sustainable/Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

[illegible] 58 Webster St., Oakland, 510-444-1231 (California Cuisine/Caribbean/Central American/Nuevo Latino/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

Brown Sugar Kitchen 2534 Mandela Parkway, Oakland, 510-839-7685, (Southern/Soul Food) $$

Caffe 817 817 Washington St., Oakland, 510-271-7965, (Cafe/Coffeehouse/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Cafe Hanoi Deli 920 Webster St., Oakland, 510-444-8308 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

Chef Lau's 301 8th St., Oakland, 510-835-3288 (Chinese/Seafood) $

Cock-A-Doodle Cafe 719 Washington St., Oakland, 510-465-5400 (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Cafe/Coffeehouse/California Cuisine/Nuevo Latino/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Everett & Jones Barbeque 126 Broadway, Oakland, 510-663-2350 (Barbecue) $$

Gold Bar 388 Ninth St., Oakland, 510-268-1288, (Chinese) $

[illegible] 381 15th St., Oakland, 510-832-5238, (Vietnamese) $$

Jade Villa 800 Broadway, Oakland, 510-839-1688 (Chinese) $$

[illegible] Seafood Restaurant and Oakland 901 Washington St., Oakland, 510-464-1561 (Cajun/Creole/Seafood/Southern/Soul Food) $$

[illegible] 2102 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-832-5100 (African) $$

[illegible] 651 Washington St., Oakland, 510-835-5648 (California Cuisine) $$$

[illegible] Lounge 2221 Broadway, Oakland, 510-451-4611 (Belgian/California Cuisine/French/Bars) $$-$$$

Oyster Reef 1000 Embarcadero Ave., Oakland, 510-836-2613 (Seafood) $$$

[illegible] Oakland 754 Broadway Ave., Oakland, Asian Fusion/Japanese/Sushi/Tapas/Small Plates) $$-$$$$

[illegible] 774 Webster St., Oakland, 510-835-8315 (Vietnamese) $

Restaurant [illegible] 368 Ninth St., Oakland, 510-285-9668 (Chinese/[illegible])

[illegible]'s Home 400 15th St., Oakland, 510-444-8474 (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

[illegible] 325 7th St. #111, Oakland, 510-832-2299 (Chinese) $-$$

Shanghai Restaurant 930 Webster St., Oakland, 510-465-6878 (Chinese) $-$$

[illegible] 580 Broadway, Oakland, 510-268-8385 (California Cuisine) $$$

Spice [illegible] 1822 Webster St., Oakland, 510-268-0812 (California Cuisine) $$

[illegible] Noodle 388 9th St., Oakland, 510-836-4349 (Chinese) $

[illegible] 408 8th St., Oakland, 510-444-1544 (Mexican/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

[illegible] 3441 12th St., Oakland, 510-835-5383 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

[illegible] 499 14th St., Suite 12, Oakland, 510-625-1080 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $

Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland, 510-238-9200 (Japanese/Sushi/Bars/Music Venues) $$$

[illegible] Restaurant 899 Webster St., Oakland, 510-836-2010 (Chinese) $

OAKLAND-EAST

Ba Le 1500 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-261-9800 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

Cafe [illegible] Restaurant 230 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-444-2380 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

[illegible]'s Restaurant 3231 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-534-4795 (Mexican) $

Los [illegible] 3449 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland, 510-530-3079 (Central American/Salvadoran) $

La [illegible] 3625 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-533-9550 (Mexican) $

[illegible] Barbeque 2670 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland, 510-533-8890 (Barbecue) $$

El [illegible] 3842 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-533-3905 (Mexican) $

La Estrellita Cafe 446 East 12th St., Oakland, 510-465-1118 (American/Mexican/Cafe/Coffeehouse) $$

[illegible] 336 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-465-9336 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $-$$

El Ojo de Agua 3132 E. 12th St., Oakland (Mexican) $

Old [illegible] Village 6202 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, 510-430-8771 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Vietnamese) $$

[illegible] 3872 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-536-8999 (Mexican) $-$$

[illegible] 3562 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, 510-483-0980 (Cambodian/Southeast Asian) $

Pho Ao Pho 200 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-836-6435 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

Pho Pho Lao 727 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-451-8880 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

[illegible] 3340 Foothill Blvd., Oakland, 510-430-1811 (Central American) $

Southern Cafe 311 Broadway, Oakland, 510-835-9061 (Southern/Soul Food) $$

Taqueria [illegible] 1650 Foothill Blvd., Oakland, 510-261-4251 (Mexican) $

Taqueria [illegible] 2438 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-535-1260 (Mexican) $

Taqueria [illegible] 4345 International Blvd., Oakland, 510-261-8125 (Mexican) $

OAKLAND-PIEDMONT, GRAND LAKE & EAST

[illegible] 4025 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-655-1334 (French) $$

[illegible] 832 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-834-1806 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

[illegible] 3308 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-451-8526 (California Cuisine) $$$-$$$$

Dopo 4293 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-652-3676 (Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] 3318 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-645-1912 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

[illegible] 2000 Ardmore Ct., Oakland, 510-339-3721 (American) $

[illegible] 372 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-444-7858 (Korean) $$

[illegible] 3411 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-663-2500 (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$-$$$

[illegible] 3261 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-465-8854 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

Z Cafe and Bar 2115 Broadway, Oakland, 510-663-2085 (American/Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine/Cafe/Coffeehouse/Bars) $$

[illegible] Oakland 567 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-839-9124 (Italian/Pizza) $$

OAKLAND-ROCKRIDGE

[illegible]'s 5356 College Ave., Oakland, 510-595-4060 (California Cuisine/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

Kiss Sushi and Grill 5365 College Ave. #2, Oakland, 510-595-7388 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

[illegible] 5405 College Ave., Oakland, 510-658-4400 (Italian/Middle Eastern) $$$

[illegible] 5301 College Ave., Oakland, 510-655-8388 (Asian Fusion/Seafood) $$-$$$

[illegible] 3201 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-652-8157 (Japanese/Sushi) $$-$$$

[illegible] 6048 College Ave., Oakland, 510-655-3298 (Southeast Asian) $$

[illegible] 5912 College Ave., Oakland, 510-420-0813 (American/Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine) $$

[illegible] 5100 Broadway, Oakland, 510-601-4587 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $

Zachary's Chicago Pizza 5801 College Ave., Oakland, 510-655-6385 (Pizza) $-$$

OAKLAND-TEMESCAL

[illegible] 5095 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-595-4213 (Bakery/Cafe/Coffeehouse) $-$$

Cafe Colucci 6427 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-601-7999 (African/Ethiopian/Eritrean/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] 4301 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-601-6001 (Korean) $

[illegible] 2310 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-663-5921 (Korean) $$

[illegible] 3102 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-658-2998 (Korean) $$

[illegible] 4281 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-594-0661 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

[illegible] Korean Restaurant 4390 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-652-0507 (Korean) $$

La [illegible] 4199 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-601-8226 (Mexican) $

[illegible] Royal Cafe 4012 Broadway, Oakland, 510-547-1600 (American/Breakfast/Brunch) $

Marc 49 4915 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-652-2409 (Tapas/Small Plates/Wine Bars) $-$$

[illegible] Seafood 4933 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-654-8504 (Seafood/Southern/Soul Food) $

[illegible] 4315 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-653-3290 (Korean) $-$$

[illegible] 2601 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-267-0300 (Korean) $

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On Sunday, February 14, Adagia Restaurant unveils a prix fixe, four course dinner complete with complimentary sparkling wine and flowers.

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Local Food View:
Let Me Count the Ways

It's February and there's romance in the air...time to show your honey dearest (or favorite single friends) how much you care with some sustainable, local flavor! Whether you lovingly prepare a homemade meal with your favorite local produce, enjoy a romantic bottle of wine from your local vintner, tie a ribbon around a box of delectable organic chocolates, or surprise your sweetie with a beautiful bouquet from your locally-sourced flower shop, we hope you enjoy spreading the love this season!

If you're planning to celebrate the holiday with a fellow foodie, you might want to check out Food from the Heart, taking place Friday and Saturday February 12 & 13 at the Ferry Building Marketplace in San Francisco. Visit www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com for more information.

Happy Valentine's Day from CAFF!

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R&C

Sweetie Pie & Poppy's Authentic Southern Cuisine 5709 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, 510-547-8743. (Soul and Soul Food) $-$$

Yaoji 4905 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-653-8691. (African/Moroccan/Spanish) $$

Yet Jae Za Jang 4390 Telegraph Ave., Suite B, Oakland, 510-652-1600. (Chinese/Korean) $

TRI VALLEY

Blue Agave Club 625 Main St., Pleasanton, 925-417-1224. (Mexican) $$$

Bridges 44 Church St., Danville, 925-820-7200. (Asian Fusion/California Cuisine) $$$-$$$$

Cafe Esin 2416 San Ramon Blvd., Suite 140, San Ramon, 925-314-0974. (California Cuisine) $$$

Las Camarones 2130 First St., Livermore, 925-449-4458. (Mexican) $

Marbel and Dominique's Bistro 343 Hartz Ave., Pleasanton, 925-462-0100. (French) $$$-$$$$

Oscar's Cafe 620 Main St., Pleasanton, 925-846-4222. (American/Breakfast/Brunch) $-$$

Forbes Mill Steakhouse 200 Sycamore Valley Rd. West, Danville, 925-552-0505. (Steak House) $$$$

[illegible] Grill 1061-A Brewer Pl., San Ramon, 925-830-1144. (Hawaiian) $

Masala Indian House 499 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville, 925-362-4800. (Indian, Pakistani) $$

The Peasant & the Pear 267 Hartz Ave., Danville, 925-820-6611. (California Cuisine) $$-$$$

Blvd [illegible] Cafe 4220 Dublin Blvd., Dublin, 925-[illegible]. (Hawaiian) $

Maruni 7856 Crow Canyon Pl. #C, San Ramon, 925-277-3898. (Japanese/Sushi) $$-$$$

Sergio's Prosciutto 680 [illegible] Way, San Ramon, 925-906-9058. (Italian) $$-$$$

Saha 21304 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon, 925-829-5850. (Middle Eastern/Persian) $$

Stacey's at Waters 250 [illegible] Pl., San Ramon, 925-328-0518. (American) $

Terra Vi @ the Vineyard 39 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore, 925-449-7000. (Mexican) $$-$$$

Wente Vineyards Restaurant 5050 Arroyo Rd., Livermore, 925-456-2450. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$$$

[illegible] Bistro 115 Alamo Plaza, Alamo, 925-314-0000. (California Cuisine/Eastern European) $$

Yuzu 3496 [illegible], Danville, 925-984-1658. (Japanese/Sushi) $$-$$$

Zachary's Chicago Pizza 3110 Crow Canyon Pl., Suite D, San Ramon, 925-244-1222. (Pizza) $-$$

WALNUT CREEK

[illegible] Hamburgers 1461 [illegible] Ave., Walnut Creek, 925-939-4868. (Diner) $

Huynh 1512 Locust St., Walnut Creek, 925-952-9688. (Vietnamese) $$

[illegible] Mangia Bene 12 [illegible] Boulevard Way, Walnut Creek, 925-939-2420. (Deli/Italian) $

[illegible] 1521 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, 925-287-8188. (Chinese) $$

The Original Hick'ry Pit 1485 South Main St., Walnut Creek, 925-934-7400. (Diner/Brunch/Breakfast) $$

Prima 1522 North Main St., Walnut Creek, 925-935-7780. (Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $$$-$$$$

Rocco's Ristorante & Pizzeria 2909 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, 925-947-6105. (Italian/Pizza) $-$$

[illegible] Tea House 1520 [illegible], Walnut Creek, 925-287-8088. (Chinese) $$-$$$

Va de Vi Bistro & Wine Bar 1511 Mount Diablo Blvd., Walnut Creek, 925-979-0100. (Asian Fusion/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Tapas/Small Plates/Wine Bar) $$-$$$

Walnut Creek Yacht Club 1555 Bonanza St., Walnut Creek, 925-944-3600. (California Cuisine/Organic/Seafood) $$-$$$ ■

FOOD & WINE

CULINARY & WINE

7th Annual Food from the Bold [illegible] and restaurateurs offer chocolate tastings and seasonal hors d'oeuvres, wine from Napa Valley Vintners, Prosecco, music, tango, and sake tasting. Plus [illegible] demos by Michael Recchiuti and Parisian artist Mark Ansiaume. Proceeds benefit Slow Food San Francisco. For info, visit SlowFoodSanFrancisco.com. Fri., Feb. 12, 5-8 p.m. $2 tasting tix, $4 for wine. Ferry Building, 1 Ferry Building, San Francisco, 415-693-0996.

[illegible] Sessions Mixologist [illegible] Long makes [illegible] on the spot using cocktail [illegible], [illegible], and some specialty spirits. Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Continues through June 1. [illegible] Rooms, 1308 Lincoln Ave., Alameda, 510-749-[illegible].

East Bay Green Drinks Monthly gathering for people interested in sustainability. Topics include green business, architecture, design, [illegible], and clean energy. Third Wednesday of every month, 5:30-8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland, 510-451-4677. LukasOakland.com.

Fat [illegible] Party Special menu Market [illegible] sausage and shrimp [illegible], and [illegible] sausage [illegible] accompanied by a Fat Tuesday Market. Feb. 15-17, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto, 1919 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-845-7771. Spengers.com.

Fenestra's [illegible] Valentine Valentine's wine tasting with the 2007 Pinot Gris from [illegible] Concord [illegible] Sunol, a 2008 [illegible] from [illegible] Vineyards, a 2008 Graciano from Bokisch Vineyard in Clements Hills area, and three 2006 Tempranillos. Winemaker [illegible] Avery and owner Lanny Replogle will be on hand for a Q&A. Sat., Feb. 13, 12:30, 2 & 3:30 p.m. $5. Fenestra Winery, 83 [illegible], Livermore, 925-447-5246. FenestraWinery.com.

[illegible] Fashion [illegible] with DJs [illegible] and Karl Kyle, plus $5 [illegible]. Tue., Feb. 16. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland, 510-451-4677. LukasOakland.com.

My Funny Valentine Singles party hosted by [illegible] with $1 oysters and $5 cocktail specials. Sun., Feb. 14, 8 p.m. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland, 510-451-4677. LukasOakland.com.

My Little Sweetheart Valentine Dinner & Dance Party Includes pasta, [illegible]. Children [illegible]. Call 925-676-5200 to make a reservation. Fri., Feb. 12, 6-7:30 p.m. $10. Pleasant Hill Community Center, 320 Civic Dr., Pleasant Hill, 925-676-5200.

Dinner Valentine's Day Specials Market grilled "Valentine" rib eye steak, with [illegible], lobster [illegible], and [illegible] with garlic and garlic chips. [illegible] specials include [illegible] Market [illegible] with [illegible]. Prosecco pricing on champagne including Moet & Chandon "Nectar Impérial" Rosé and [illegible]. Sun., Feb. 14. [illegible] Broadway Ave., Oakland.

San Valentine Beer Tasting The Celebrator Beer News twenty-second anniversary [illegible] includes samplings from thirty breweries, special bottles, memorabilia and [illegible] by pioneers of the craft beer movement. Sun., Feb. 14, 4-8 p.m. $40. [illegible] 1464 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-843-2739.

Valentine's Day Valentine at Spenger's Create "perfect pairs" with soup or salad, [illegible] crab cakes, [illegible], fillet of salmon, [illegible] vegetables, and desserts. Plus, Valentine's [illegible] service. Feb. 12-14. Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto, 1919 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-845-7771. Spengers.com.

Valentine's Dinner Four-course [illegible] prepared by Chef Francis [illegible] includes [illegible] oysters on the half shell with Valentine mignonette, warm winter [illegible] salad, [illegible] and [illegible] eye of beef with [illegible] sauce Americaine and Brazilian Pedro Melo. Sat., Feb. 14. $45, $20 wine pairing. [illegible] Cafe & Lounge, 272 McAllister St., San Francisco, 415-[illegible].

Vegan Vday Dance Benefit for [illegible] with vegan hors d'oeuvres, an open wine/beer bar, a raffle ticket, includes [illegible] by Sugar Beet Sweets and Fat [illegible] gift bags, and a date auction. Info at VeganHealth.org/VDay. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. $50. David Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley.

FARMERS' MARKETS

[illegible] Farmers' Market Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Park St. (at Haight Ave.) & [illegible] St., Alameda.

Bayfair Center Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Bayfair Center, 15555 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-352-6000. ShopBayfair.com.

Concord Farmers' Market Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Todos Santos Plaza, Willow Pass Rd. and Grant St., Concord, 925-671-3464.

Farm Fresh Market [illegible] Produce Stand Wednesdays, 3-6:30 p.m. 510-848-1704. EcologyCenter.org. Frances Albrier Community Center, San Pablo Park, 2800 Park St., Berkeley, 510-981-5150. Ci.berkeley.ca.us/recreation/[illegible]

Kaiser Permanente Hayward Farmers' Market At the main entrance to the hospital. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Hayward, 27400 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward.

Kaiser Permanente Oakland Farmers' Market Fridays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Oakland, 3801 Howe St., Oakland.

Kaiser Permanente Walnut Creek Farmers' Market In the cafeteria patio. Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Kaiser Walnut Creek, 1425 South Main St., Walnut Creek.

Kensington Farmers' Market Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Colusa Circle, at [illegible], Kensington.

Laurel District Farmers' Market Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Laurel District Farmers' Market, [illegible] MacArthur Blvd., Oakland.

[illegible] Farmers' Market Thursdays, 3-7 p.m. Free. [illegible], 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Shattuck Ave. at Rose St., Berkeley.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, 510-981-6700.

[illegible] Farmers' Market Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. DMV Parking Lot, 5300 Claremont Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m. Free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Derby St. (at Martin Luther King Jr. Way), Berkeley. ■

PICK

Vegan Valentine's Day

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MOVIES

ALL ABOUT STEVE

The essential Buscemi-ness of *Saint John of Las Vegas*. The mildewed ominousness of *Terribly Happy*

By Kelly Vance

Steve Buscemi as Saint John and Romany Malco as his coworker Virgil in *Saint John of Las Vegas*.

John Alighieri, aka *Saint John of Las Vegas*, has a weakness. Maybe more than one.

For starters, he's a degenerate gambler, a hopeless sucker for putting his money down on foolish propositions. John (Steve Buscemi) is the type of guy who will pull into a service station with his last twenty-dollar bill, go up to the cashier to buy five bucks worth of gas, then spend the entire twenty on a handful of those colorful scratch-off Lotto tickets that crop up like weeds along the interstates, beguiling hard-luck guys with instant-millionaire dreams.

John has dreams, too. Cheap ones. Upon finding himself in Albuquerque, he takes a job in a beat-out auto insurance brokerage, where he cowers in his cubicle and tries — really tries, for about five minutes — to avoid getting involved in a sex-and-donuts thing with Jill (Sarah Silverman), the giant leering woman who prowls the office putting up smiley-face stickers. She could break him in half, but he seems oblivious to the danger.

Meanwhile, the enigmatic bantam-rooster boss, Mr. Townsend (Peter Dinklage), takes a liking to John for some reason and offers him a chance for advancement. John is to go out on the road with the company's top fraud investigator, Virgil (Romany Malco), to help him catch insurance cheats and learn the business, as well as soak up a little Sun Belt torpor.

Their itinerary takes them through New Mexico and Arizona and into Nevada. That puts John on a collision course with Las Vegas, the place he's trying to avoid, the place where all the things he can't resist call out to him like sirens. The picaresque framework also gives writer-director Hue Rhodes the opportunity to haul out a lineup of screw-loose characters and situations, not the least of which is Saint John himself.

It's a relief to see Steve Buscemi reveling in his essential Buscemi-ness again. The 52-year-old actor, who has appeared in more than a hundred movies and TV episodes since 1985, burst onto the scene as an archetypal urban neighborhood character: the loser who never believes he's finished, with a wise mouth that never quits. Buscemi's bulging-eyed features and nonstop nervous banter made him the undisputed king of Lower Manhattan hipster flicks in the Eighties and Nineties (Parker Posey was the queen), and he's been inching his way into the mainstream ever since. The key word is "inching."

A few recent Buscemi roles — *The Messenger* and *Youth in Revolt* in particular — have cast him as a grouchy middle-class suburban type, of all things. Steve Buscemi should never play an ordinary citizen. He should never play somebody's dad. There should be a clause in his contract that prohibits his character from watering lawns.

His very best parts — in *Mystery Train*, *In the Soup*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Fargo*, the incomparable *Trees Lounge*, *Coffee and Cigarettes*, as Tony Blundetto on *The Sopranos*, and even as the frantic sidekick in *Armageddon* — have relied on his essential untrustworthiness in tandem with his Italian-American corner-boy charm. His best friends should be shylocks and nurses who sell pills on the side, not GI Joes and cookie bakers. Saint John is more like it. A guy who can stagger into a minimart with his suit torn up and his face a mass of contusions and plunk down $1,000 in cash for 1,000 instant Jackpot Madness tickets, is a character we can invest in.

On the trail of a phony Buick Wildcat rear-end collision claim, John and Virgil zigzag their way across the Southwest's underbelly, from a junkyard to a strip club (Emmanuelle Chriqui as lap dancer Ms. Tasty D'Lite) to a carnival sideshow (John Cho as the Flame Lord, a hapless daredevil) to a nudist camp, on the way to John's epiphany at Ocean's 11, a cheapo Vegas casino. The further John travels from his nine-to-five Squaresville existence, the more he relates to the people he meets.

True, *Saint John of Las Vegas* is slackly written, artificially episodic, and plagued by rookie filmmaker Rhodes' faulty pacing. But Rhodes, a former software executive turned entertainer, at least has the wisdom to turn his star loose. John's last name notwithstanding, his journey through the underworld is not exactly a divine comedy. It's not in the top 50 percent of Buscemi movies, either. But it's not bad.

Saint John of Las Vegas

Written and directed by Hue Rhodes. With Steve Buscemi, Romany Malco, and Peter Dinklage. Opens Friday.

Terribly Happy

Directed by Henrik Ruben Genz. With Jakob Cedergren, Lene Maria Christensen, and Kim Bodnia. Opens Friday.

Whatever luster last year's excellent war adventure *Flame and Citron* gave the Danish film industry, Henrik Ruben Genz' *Terribly Happy* squanders.

The 2008 film was originally titled *Frygtelig lykkelig*, which must have been fun for movie-ticket buyers in Copenhagen to say when they walked up to the box office. That fun evaporates, however, as the story of big-city policeman Robert Hansen (played by Jakob Cedergren) unspools. Like unlucky cops before him in countless crime flicks, Hansen is being punished for his role in a violent incident by being exiled — in his case to the dismal village of Skarrild in the low, damp, flat landscape of South Jutland, Denmark, where the only distinguishing topographical feature is the nearby bog. How many of the film's characters will disappear into that bog?

The townsfolk are surly to the extreme. Despite the new constable's initial friendliness, the only kindness he can scare up among the locals comes from Ingerlise (Lene Maria Christensen), horny wife of the town bully, Jørgen (Kim Bodnia). We can guess where that is leading. The rest of the townsfolk are no help. The village doctor (Lars Brygmann) has a weird manner, and the elderly card players at the Skarrild general store mostly squint and grumble. The only child in town, little Dorthe (Mathilde Maack), daughter of Ingerlise and Jørgen, is fond of pushing her baby carriage, the one with the squeaky wheels, up and down the street in the middle of the night. "People disappear here," mutters one old man ominously to Officer Hansen. You betcha.

No surprise, then, that characters begin to get bumped off. With its scattershot echoes of *Twin Peaks*, *Bad Day at Black Rock*, and somewhere in the far distance, director Carl Dreyer, *Terribly Happy* tortures its running time mercilessly. We can spot every single plot turn coming across the tidelands from five kilometers away. Certainly someone deserves to get shot. In a more equitable world, the primary suspect would be director Genz, who adapted the mildewed screenplay with Dunja Gry Jensen from Erling Jepsen's novel. ●

To share this story, go to: ebx.by/saintjohn

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MOVIES & THEATERS

To learn where a movie is playing, note the abbreviations at the end of each listing, then consult the theater guide at the bottom of this page. Capsule reviews are written by Andrew [illegible] (A.G.), Cole Haddon (C.H.), J.R. Jones (J.J.), and Kelly Vance (K.V.). For a schedule of repertory films, see One-Night Stands at the end of these listings. Please send info fourteen days before event date to editor@eastbayexpress.com

OPENING

Happy Tears [illegible]

[illegible] (K.V.)

My Name Is Khan Shahrukh Khan [illegible] 9/11 [illegible] Karan Johar. [illegible]

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief Chris Columbus directs this [illegible] Poseidon. Starring Logan Lerman, [illegible] [illegible]

Saint John of Las Vegas Steve Buscemi returns to [illegible] (K.V.)

Terribly Happy (Frygtelig lykkelig) We've seen this one before. [illegible]

[illegible] (K.V.)

Valentine's Day [illegible] (121 min.) (K.V.) [illegible]

Showtimes Online

Movie showtimes and online ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com

Theater Guide

This guide explains the abbreviations at the end of each capsule. **AL** = Albany **ATC** = [illegible] Theatre & Dragées **BC** = [illegible] Concord **BH** = Blackhawk **BP** = [illegible] **BS** = Bay Street **CA** = [illegible] **CAPH** = [illegible] Pleasant Hill **CC** = Century [illegible] **CCC** = Contra Costa Cinemas **CEPH** = Century Pleasant Hill **CH** = Century Hilltop **CHY** = Century Hayward **CI** = Cinedome Newark **CRC** = Crow Canyon **CSC** = Chabot Space and Science **CUC** = Century Union City **CWC** = Century Walnut Creek **DV** = Dublin Valley **GL** = Grand Lake **JL** = Jack London **LP** = [illegible] **NM** = [illegible] **OA** = [illegible] **PH** = [illegible] **RA** = Regal Antioch **SM** = [illegible] Cinemas [illegible] **SV** = [illegible] Cinemas [illegible] **RE** = Regal Hacienda **RT** = [illegible] Theater **S** = [illegible] **UBC** = UA Berkeley **UAEB** = UA Emery Bay **V** = Vine **WWS** = West Wind Solano

BP, CWC, FB, CEPH, CH, CUC, CN, BH, CCC, GL, S, RCC, WHB)

The Wolfman Horror with Benicio Del Toro as The Wolfman. Also starring Anthony Hopkins and Emily Blunt. ATC, BC, BP, GB, CEPH, BH, CUC, CN, BH, CCC, GL

ONGOING

3 Idiots Aamir Khan and Sharman Joshi star in this comedy about two friends who set out to find a long lost companion. Directed by Rajkumar Hirani. (A.B)

A Serious Man The Coen bros. return to the Minneapolis metro area, but this time they're making fun of Jewish Americans instead of Swedes (as in *Fargo*). The dry, ultra-arch, weirdly hilarious plight of stoic physics professor and [illegible] Larry Gopnik (a brilliant Michael Stuhlbarg) piles insult on top of indignity as everything in the world goes wrong for Larry — and his only recourse is to consult a series of condescending, incomprehensible religious [illegible]. There's a joke in here somewhere, and it's on Larry, the affair we figure, but there's one half a movie left in front of us. As usual at a Coen Bros. film, the camera work is magnificent and the character parts are beautifully played (by Sari Lennick, Fred Melamed, Richard Kind, and Adam Arkin). But, also as usual, there's something sly and overly analytical about it, as if Joel and Ethan Coen were dissecting "American stereotypes of the '60s" for a Ph.D thesis. Is Larry a schlemiel, a [illegible] or a schmendrik, and who cares? (105 min.) (K.V.) (RCS)

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel The Chipmunks are an act whose brand of humor some fans will not understand — much like the Three Stooges or Jerry Lewis. But Chipmunk fans of all ages will find plenty to chortle about in this fast-paced cute comedy, a mix of animation and live action that sees the boys, contending with their ongoing 55-year showbiz career (they haven't aged five minutes), going to high school; a rival group of blonde, singing chipmunks called the Chipettes; and their sleazy ex-manager (David Cross). Bagdasarian Productions' animation is top-notch; the writing, by three screenplay writers, somewhat less so. Modest artistry by Betty Thomas (*Dr. Dolittle, I Spy*). Shut up and pass the [illegible] (92 min.) (K.V.) (BC, BP, CP, CH, CUC, RH)

An Education A precocious middle-class London high school student named Jenny (in a magnetic performance by Carey Mulligan) falls head over heels for an urbane, generous older man named David (Peter Sarsgaard), with a veneer of charm, and takes off with him to the opera, a trip to Paris, etc., circa 1961. But there's something a bit dodgy about David and his friends. Danish move-over novelist Lone Scherfig (who did *Italian for Beginners*) tells this something tale with a maximum of visual and verbal style and lets her able cast do the rest, led by Mulligan and Sarsgaard. Alfred Molina as Jenny's fretting dad, Emma Thompson and Olivia Williams as her concerned school mistress, and Sally Hawkins in a quick, jolly role as the other woman. The smart screenplay was adapted by journalist-novelist Nick Hornby from a memoir by journalist Lynn Barber (95 min.) (K.V.) (BB, CAPH, EL, EA, V)

Avatar Five years in the making, three hours in the watching, writer-director-technical wizard James Cameron (*The Terminator, The Abyss, Titanic*) aims for epic sweep with his story of rapacious earthlings invading the heavily jungled moon of Pandora and trying to dislodge the tall, powerful, blue-skinned Avatars in order to steal their minerals. The CGI visuals are certainly gorgeous — fire-lit ferns, saber-tigers, flying dragons, raging robots, and such — but the proceedings are entirely second-hand (à la *Dances with Wolves, The New World*, etc.) and the dialogue is laughable. There's a good guy, a paraplegic marine named Jake (Sam Worthington), who finds himself in his role as a shape-shifting Avatar warrior — but he gets lost in the shuffle. The US military/industrial bad guys (Stephen Lang, Giovanni Ribisi) are standard-issue, as are the Na'Vi tribespeople, including Jake's princess girlfriend (voice of Zoe Saldana). Even the King of the World sometimes needs writing help. (162 min.) (K.V.) (ATC, BC, BP, CWC, CE, CEPH, CH, CUC, CR, CCC, GL, EA, RH, R, UAB)

The Blind Side Based on the nonfiction book by Michael Lewis, one proven screenwriter tells the story of Michael Oher, a gigantic black teenager from impoverished West Memphis who was accepted as a charity case by a local Christian academy and taken in and ultimately adopted by a wealthy white family, to become an All-America offensive tackle who was drafted in the first round this year by the Baltimore Ravens. The story is inspiring and involves sports, but to call it as a sports story would be wrong, as real center is Leigh Anne Tuohy (Sandra Bullock in a fine performance), the strong-willed Southern woman whose love and generosity bring out a [illegible] to transform a boy into a functioning young man with a promising future. Some will find the movie racially paternalistic, and they may well be right, but as a fable about the power of giving, it hits pretty hard. John Lee Hancock (*The Rookie*) directed his own script with Tim McGraw, Teddy Bowes and Quinton Aaron as Michael Oher (128 min.) (J.J.) (CWC, EA, RA, RH, RCC, OAB)

The Book of Eli Denzel Washington stars in this

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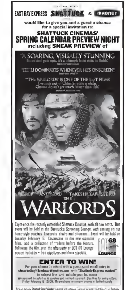

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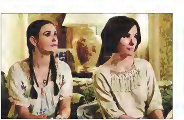

Happy Tears

post-apocalyptic fable as the guardian of a tome that may contain the secrets to both humanity's [illegible] strife and their possibly redemption. Gary Oldman co-stars as a thuggish honcho who has plans to steal the book. Directed by the Hughes brothers. (118 min.) BE, BC, EP, CE, CEPH, CH, CUC, RA, RY, JL, UAB

Chance Pe Dance Genelia D'Souza and [illegible] star in this tale of a young man trying to break into Bollywood. Directed by Ken Ghosh

Crazy Heart Jeff Bridges gives a signature career performance as Bad Blake, a graying, boozing [illegible] singer-songwriter intent on drinking himself into the ground on a nowhere tour of Southwestern bars and bowling alleys. To the rescue comes Jean (Maggie Gyllenhaal), a single mother with a few miles on her as well – and Tommy Sweet, Bad's one-time protégé, now a rising country star (Colin Farrell). Can the old boy turn himself around? The well-worn screenplay, adapted by director Scott Cooper from [illegible] Cobb's novel, [illegible] when Bridges [illegible] the songs. They were written by T Bone Burnett with Stephen Bruton and Ryan Bingham, and Bridges sings them with drunken authority. He grabs hold of the character of Bad [illegible]. Also with Robert Duvall and Paul Herman. (111 min.) (KV) ACT, BC, CWC, CUC, CAPH, CA, PM, RA, RH. V

Dear John An inconsequential [illegible] star-crossed love [illegible] disguised as [illegible] courtesy director Lasse Hallström and [illegible] Nicholas Sparks. An [illegible] soldier (hunk-of-the-month Channing Tatum) with a [illegible] father (Richard Jenkins) meets a [illegible] girl (Amanda Seyfried from *Jennifer's Body*) while on leave in [illegible] hometown of Charleston, SC, circa 2001. He ships [illegible] and that's it. Could have been a lot more [illegible] not to mention [illegible] [illegible] but it's not enough. [illegible] (*The Cider House Rules*, *Chocolat*, *The Shipping News*). Chalk up one more. (105 min.) (KV) ACT, BC, EP, CWC, CE, CEPH, CH, CUC, CH, RY, CUC, S, CRC, RA, RH, JL, UAB

Edge of Darkness Police drama about a [illegible] (Mel Gibson) investigating the death of his daughter. Directed by Martin Campbell. (117 min.) ACT, BC, EP, CWC, CE, CEPH, CH, CUC, CH, CRC, RA, RH, JL, UAB

Fantastic Mr. Fox Maybe all along Wes Anderson was an [illegible] genius waiting to bust out, and perhaps his live-action movies were only rehearsals for this [illegible] reading of Roald Dahl's [illegible] tale of a [illegible] fox (voice of George Clooney) and his animal friends and [illegible] planning one last raid on the ridiculously fortified [illegible] of three mean old humans. Maybe. But there's no denying that the [illegible] to artistic detail, and the [illegible] in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* [illegible] triumphant evidence of Anderson's storytelling talent, and has everything from the supporting [illegible] (Bill Murray, Meryl Streep, Willem Dafoe, Michael Gambon et al.) to the crafty little [illegible]. Now can Anderson (*The Royal Tenenbaums*, *The Darjeeling Limited*) ever go back to [illegible]? (87 min.) (KV) PCC

From Paris With Love [illegible] Rhys Meyers stars alongside John Travolta in this story of an undercover CIA agent and his [illegible] job. Pierre Morel

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DEAR JOHN

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SONY

directs, co-written by [illegible] ARC, BB, BC, BP, CNC, LB, CEPH, CH, CUC, CR, RH, CEC, GL, RA, RH, JL, UAB

I Hate a [illegible] ([illegible]) Fardeen Khan, Shahrukh Khan star in [illegible] comedy about the search for a marriage [illegible]. Directed by [illegible].

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus Terry Gilliam's first and most emotionally [illegible] film since *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* tells a [illegible] children's bedtime tale for [illegible] grown-ups. The [illegible], immortal [illegible] showman (Christopher Plummer, starring) and his troupe wander the underbelly of contemporary England in a caravan, putting on shows and [illegible] unsuspecting squares to some major psychedelic soul-searching [illegible] a magic mirror. All the while, compulsive gambler [illegible] is making bets with the devil (Tom Waits) involving the doctor's delectable teenage daughter (Lily Cole). [illegible] visual husband, in a Gilliam project, to be [illegible] as well as disturbing, but there's an [illegible] in this [illegible] humanistic [illegible] the final performance of Heath Ledger as a [illegible] adapted by Parnassus. When Ledger died during production the role was [illegible] by a [illegible] in [illegible] Johnny Depp, Jude Law, and Colin Farrell. See it on the biggest screen you can and be swept away. Co-written by Gilliam and Charles McKeown (122 min.). (KV) [illegible], UAB

Invictus Newly [illegible] Nelson Mandela (played by Morgan Freeman with pomp and circumstance) uses rugby, and especially Springboks captain François Pienaar (plucky Matt Damon), with [illegible] to help unite and reconcile [illegible] in post-apartheid South Africa. The sports sequences at the 1995 Rugby World Cup are [illegible] and director Clint Eastwood [illegible] how to milk a [illegible] for all it's worth, but Anthony Peckham's screenplay (adapted from John Carlin's book) [illegible] to fill in all the [illegible] of the dramatic [illegible]. Might [illegible] have been a documentary. Actor Tony Kgoroge does a nice job with the [illegible] of Mandela's security staff (134 min.). (KV) [illegible] UAB

Ishqiya Vidya Balan, Arshad Warsi, and [illegible] star in this tale of [illegible]. Directed by Abhishek Chaubey. [illegible]

It's Complicated How to [illegible] middle-aged romantic comedy [illegible] gold. Hire Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin, and Steve Martin to portray [illegible] (what else?) but lovely and [illegible] owner, the [illegible] ex-husband [illegible] and the [illegible] she hires to [illegible] respectively. That [illegible] book and let them work. Writer-director Nancy Meyers has [illegible] a career [illegible] these [illegible] roundelays (*Baby Boom*, *Father of the Bride*, etc.), and this time [illegible] with a [illegible] kitchen [illegible] a smashing [illegible]. The laughs keep [illegible] in spite of the [illegible] situations (119 min.). (KV) [illegible] CEPH, CUC, CEC, CPC, RA, RR, UAB

The Last Station Filmmaker Michael Hoffman's [illegible] literary bio stars Christopher Plummer as aged [illegible] Leo Tolstoy and Helen Mirren as his combative wife Sofya, battling [illegible] over his estate [illegible]. When Plummer and Mirren go into their spotted marital hysterics, [illegible] by [illegible] Mirren's [illegible] James McAvoy (as a diffident [illegible]) and Paul Giamatti (as Tolstoy's smashing [illegible] disciple) are [illegible] Hoffman's screenplay, adapted from the book by Jay Parini, [illegible] for a straightforward [illegible] of Tolstoy's end days. It may be a [illegible] the [illegible] more [illegible] McAvoy's [illegible] and his [illegible] girlfriend (Kerry Condon) [illegible] go with the [illegible] smashing (112 min.). 2009 rated R. (KV) CEPH, AL

Legion Biblical themes [illegible] this apocalyptic [illegible] from director Scott Stewart. Paul Bettany and Dennis Quaid star (100 min.). [illegible] BC, [illegible] CEPH, CR, CUC, RA, RH, JL, UAB

The Lovely Bones Filmmaker Peter Jackson, of *Lord of the Rings* fame, [illegible] the [illegible] energy in heaven (or is it purgatory?), [illegible] through [illegible] with [illegible] teenage [illegible] Susie Salmon (Saoirse Ronan from *Atonement*) [illegible] her revenge on the murderer (Stanley Tucci) [illegible] creepy [illegible] up [illegible] glades while her parents (Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weisz) grieve for her down below. Much more interesting than CGI [illegible] are the earthly [illegible] of Susie, her family, and her [illegible] in their Seventies-era Pennsylvania [illegible] and [illegible] Jackson co-writer [illegible] adapted Alice Sebold's novel with Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens. [illegible] this same [illegible] type of [illegible] much more convincingly in his 1994 drama *Heavenly Creatures*. Also with [illegible] Sarandon and Michael Imperioli (135 min.). (KV) [illegible] CR, CUC, CEC, RA, RH, UAL, UAB

Mysteries of Egypt National Geographic and [illegible] of [illegible] reveal the architecture, legends, history — and most importantly, mysteries — of ancient Egyptian civilization. CSC

Pirate Radio For people who can never get enough '60s rock on the soundtrack, the film event of the year. But [illegible] anyone else can find a laugh in the [illegible] of a crew of [illegible] deejays. [illegible] the Kinks, Who, Troggs, Turtles, [illegible] Jeff Beck, Dusty Springfield, et al., to English listeners from a ship offshore in the North Sea. On board are Philip Seymour Hoffman, Rhys Ifans, [illegible] Nick Frost, and Tom Sturridge among the deejays, with [illegible] Kenneth Branagh as the sinister government minister [illegible] to shut them down, and Emma Thompson as somebody's mod mum. It's a vinyl [illegible] [illegible] on the [illegible] sets. Directed with [illegible] by Richard Curtis (*Notting Hill*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*) from his own screenplay. British title: *The Boat That Rocked* (135 min.). (KV) [illegible]

Precious Urban [illegible] story [illegible] amazing [illegible] with a dollop of redemption [illegible] first-time actor Gabourey Sidibe [illegible] with the [illegible] body and [illegible] her [illegible] being as Precious [illegible]

Showtimes Online

Movie showtimes and online ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com

since 1987 who [illegible] all the [illegible] two [illegible] parents [illegible] to her Through it all, Thomas [illegible] expressions [illegible] from [illegible] unknowable to [illegible] to determined — a remarkable [illegible] Lee Daniels (*Shadowboxer*), [illegible] from Geoffrey Fletcher's adaptation of Sapphire's young-adult novel, doesn't spare us the details of [illegible] humiliation, but he doesn't stint on the upside, either. [illegible] character [illegible] by Mo'Nique as the monster mother, Paula Patton as a classmate, and Mariah Carey [illegible] as a welfare officer (110 min.). (KV) [illegible] RA, RCC, UAB

The Princess and the Frog Disney's return to hand-drawn animation pays off triumphantly in this charming, [illegible] musical set in old New Orleans and the surrounding bayou and filled with [illegible] catchiness, lively [illegible] and a rich cast of African-American characters. In a [illegible] switch, the [illegible] a poor young woman named Tiana (Anika Noni Rose) meets the [illegible] prince-turned-frog, and she turns [illegible] frog herself. Amazing voice cast, Keith David [illegible] Jenifer Lewis, Terrence Howard, Oprah Winfrey, Michael-Leon Wooley, John Goodman, and Jim Cummings as Ray the Cajun firefly. If this is any [illegible] of Pixar's effect on Planet [illegible] the image [illegible] one of the best [illegible] Disney ever made. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker [illegible] a [illegible] they [illegible] up with four other [illegible] Welcome back, Disney (97 min.). (KV) [illegible] CCC, RH

Sherlock Holmes Robert Downey Jr. hams and brawls as the famed English sleuth while Jude Law simmers and [illegible] as [illegible] in criminology, Dr. Watson. Both get a [illegible] workout on the trail of a mysterious black-magic cultist trying to overthrow the British government. It's Guy Ritchie's idea of a teenage project, set the story in [illegible] gritty, cluttered Victorian London, drape the boys in [illegible] finery [illegible] give the [illegible] detective classic the same sort of [illegible] and

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[illegible] Anderson [illegible] Sophie employed in *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking [illegible]*, *RocknRolla*, and his other too-trendy testosterone derbies. [illegible] that [illegible]? [illegible] support by Mark Strong as the bad guy, Eddie Marsan as [illegible] Lestrade, and Rachel McAdams, a [illegible] as [illegible] loathing [illegible] and fellow [illegible]. The new story and screenplay by a team of four writers. It is [illegible] than most of the [illegible] Arthur Conan Doyle [illegible] for Holmes, and Downey looks like he's having fun. A good sign. (128 min.) (KV) [illegible] CAPH DUC S, BA, PM

A Single Man Colin Firth, as a 1960s-era [illegible] gay man mourning the death of his longtime lover, gives a [illegible] performance in [illegible] Tom Ford's adaptation of Christopher Isherwood's [illegible] by the [illegible] and Ford's [illegible] Julianne Moore as the [illegible] of English and [illegible] (Pitt) and performance and overflowing with [illegible]. Adding an extra layer of [illegible] George's straight [illegible] a [illegible] in Santa Monica. Fully padded out with [illegible]. Screenplay by Ford and David [illegible]. (101 min.) (KV) (CAPH) PM, S

[illegible] The story of everyone's [illegible] half of [illegible] (CSC)

The Spy Next Door Wacky comedy about former CIA agent Bob Ho (Jackie Chan) with [illegible]. Also stars Amber Valletta as Chan's girlfriend. Directed by Brian Levant (92 mins.) (KV) BP CB CH [illegible] RA, RH, L, UA[illegible]

To Be an Astronaut [illegible] (48 min.) (CSC)

The Tooth Fairy [illegible] a self-centered, [illegible] ice hockey player (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson) is sentenced, in dreamland, to become an actual tooth fairy, [illegible] with wings and funny suit. [illegible] the [illegible] of this forgettable [illegible] good-natured [illegible] are the appearances of Julie Andrews as the fairy godmother and Billy Crystal as a wise-mouth elf. [illegible] Directed by Michael Lembeck (101 min.) (KV) (AC) [illegible] BP CE CH DUC GN PM, COC, RA, RH, JL, WWS

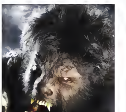
The Twilight Saga: New Moon [illegible] territory. As soon as haunted teen Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) breaks up with her vamp boyfriend Edward (Robert Pattinson) she latches onto a body-beautiful [illegible] (Taylor Lautner). [illegible] Chris Weitz opts for [illegible] the gothic splendor [illegible] John Hughes homework and [illegible] frequently funny dialogue (based on Stephenie Meyer's novels). This movie thinks it's mythology. [illegible] Stewart's performance is fine. Also with Ashley Greene, [illegible] Fanning, and Michael Sheen, as a foppish head vamp. (130 min.) (KV) (AC)

Up in the Air George Clooney once again brings us a slick corporate flare with a hidden conscience. Here [illegible] director Jason Reitman [illegible] Clooney as "termination facilitator" Ryan Bingham, who [illegible] in and out American towns the [illegible] employees by the hundreds and [illegible] His one true passion [illegible] up frequent-flyer miles. On his tail, by [illegible] a newly minted business-school graduate named Alex (Anna Kendrick), is a [illegible] and [illegible]. The screenplay, by Reitman and Sheldon Turner from Walter Kirn's novel, sums up some of the most horrible [illegible] of the 21st century [illegible] into a handful of pointed, witty scenes and [illegible] them. Good job. With Vera Farmiga as a frequent flier. (109 mins.) (KV) (AC) CMC CB CLPH CUC [illegible] CRC GA, PM CRC RH, RCC

When in Rome Comedy [illegible] New Yorker (Kristen Bell) who finds love in Rome after stealing coins from a magical fountain of love. Directed by Mark Steven Johnson (AC), [illegible] CMC, CLPH CH, CUC, S, CRC BA, RH, JL, WWS

The White Ribbon (Das weisse Band) Nothing is ever easy with filmmaker Michael Haneke and his provocative, [illegible] (*The Piano Teacher*, *Caché*, *Funny Games*). This portrait of a Northern German farming village a year before World War I is typically challenging. The seemingly peaceful community is actually a seething maelstrom of hatred and violence. [illegible] Who is beating the schoolchildren, [illegible] assaulting the town doctor, kidnapping the baron's young son, mutilating a "retarded" boy, etc? [illegible] Alas, the mystery begins to boil down to the usual [illegible] history lesson, and you may want to [illegible] but Christian Berger's rich black and white cinematography is something to see. [illegible] With Christian Friedel and Leonie Benesch as the teen schoolmaster and his sweetheart. Written and directed by Haneke (144 min.) (KV) (CAPH) AL

The Young Victoria Emily Blunt may be in slightly over her head in this [illegible] straightforward [illegible] drama about the coming of age [illegible] and the grasping of power [illegible] of England's longest-reigning monarch, Queen Victoria, but she gives it a game try. [illegible] Jean-Marc Vallée piles on the opulent scenery, [illegible] pretenders to the throne [illegible] Prince Albert (Rupert Friend of *Chéri*), a would-be [illegible] in the royal household. None of the [illegible] palaces, and a few of [illegible] Paul Bettany as the prime minister, Lord Melbourne; Miranda Richardson as Vicky's mom; Thomas Kretschmann as scheming King Leopold of Belgium [illegible] are [illegible] given [illegible] and the location work in [illegible] English [illegible] is at least a welcome change from the sound-stage [illegible] of old Hollywood. [illegible] directed. The workmanlike screenplay is by [illegible] vet Julian Fellowes (*Vanity Fair*, *Gosford* [illegible]) (100 min.) (KV) (CAPH), BA, V



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The Body Snatcher (77 min., 1945). Complicated Shadows: The Films of Val Lewton (PFA, 7:00)

Isle of the Dead (71 min., 1945). Complicated Shadows: The Films of Val Lewton (PFA, 8:40)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12

[illegible] ([illegible] min., 1920). Before "Capricious": Early Frank Capra (PFA, 7:00)

[illegible] (58 min., 1921). Before "Capricious": Early Frank Capra (PFA, 8:50)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13

West Side Story (155 min., 1961). The Kids Are Alright: Post-Fifties [illegible] and the Rise of Youth Culture (PFA, 8:00)

The Ghost Ship (69 min., 1943). Complicated Shadows: The Films of Val Lewton (PFA, 7:00)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14

[illegible] (188 min., 1966). The Kids Are Alright: Post-Fifties [illegible] and the Rise of Youth Culture (PFA, 4:15)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

[illegible] (94 min., 1984). Free Movie Night (924 Gilman St., Berkeley, 7:30)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

[illegible] (105 min., 2000). African Film Festival (PFA, 7:00)

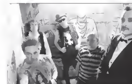
[illegible] (99 min., 2002). Presented by [illegible] (Humanist Hall, Oakland, 7:30)

MUSIC

DARK WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR

More than thirty years old, the Damned attracts a new generation to its gothic-tinged punk rock.

By Kirsty Evans


The Damned

After years of what drummer Pinch calls "bubblegum punk" on the radio, it's reassuring to know that the Damned is still out there. For those unfamiliar, the Damned formed in London in 1976. After being involved with and influencing the early punk scene, it went in a gothier direction for a while and managed to have a significant impact on the goth scene, too, with albums like 1985's *Phantasmagoria*. The creative tension between singer Dave Vanian's theatrical impulses — Pinch says that he's always been inspired by movie soundtracks — and guitarist Captain Sensible's "pop and psychedelic raucousness" gives the Damned a unique sound that's never boring. More than thirty years into its career, the band has yet to fall into the trap of being a pastiche of itself.

Although it remains more or less a cult band in the United States, in the UK it's a bit different. The Damned is part of the British cultural landscape — anyone who grew up in the UK in the Eighties can remember hearing "Grimly Fiendish" and "Smash It Up" on the radio, and the band appeared on cult TV show *The Young Ones* in 1984. It was also featured in the 2006 BBC2 documentary *Is She Really Going Out With Him?* (Britain does treasure its punk history.) Despite somewhat less mainstream exposure stateside (although there have been some high profile covers of its songs by bands like Guns N' Roses and the Offspring), the Damned's influence on other bands is considerable, and it remains a much loved part of the punk scene.

After going through a series of lineup changes, the band seems to have settled into a comfortable and cohesive group, with Vanian and Captain Sensible backed by drummer Pinch, bassist Stu West, and keyboardist Monty Oxy Moron. The funny thing about the Damned is how its members seem to have maintained genuine enthusiasm for being in a band even after so many years in the business. As venerable as they are, they don't feel like a nostalgia act. They still play the old favorites — "You have to stick staples in there because otherwise people go away pissed off," as Pinch points out — but overall its setlist is in a constant state of flux, and its members never stopped writing new material. Although none of the band's members live close enough to each other to make it feasible for them to sit down together to write, they all have their own recording studios and constantly send each other files, collaborating long-distance.

Although there's a distinctive Damned sound, it's a flexible one — punk classics like "New Rose" mingle with more gothic tunes such as "Grimly Fiendish." The members say they never try to write songs with the idea that they should sound like Damned songs. In fact, Pinch says that his early attempts to do so when he first joined the band were met with a distinctly disinterested response from Vanian and Captain Sensible, while the more off-the-wall things that he was nervous about presenting to them were met with enthusiasm. Overall, though, there's always a distinct mood to Damned songs that's dark and yet still fun. Unlike a lot of goth bands, it has never lost its sense of humor. It's that tension between darkness and dark humor, along with subtly political lyrics, that forms the Damned's distinctive sonic signature.

Despite having been around for so long, the members still clearly love touring. Last year was their busiest year in a while, although the band's maturity has led to a somewhat unusual approach to the whole touring business. "The band are almost like food tourists nowadays — we remember shows by how the meals were and what great restaurants there were," said Pinch from his home in San Diego, where he works as the stage manager for House of Blues when he's not on tour or recording with the Damned. (Apparently the last venue they played in San Francisco had a great sushi place nearby.) Last year's schedule included a special value-for-money credit crunch tour with the Alarm and Henry Cluney from Stiff Little Fingers playing a solo acoustic set. That tour was a great illustration of how unexpectedly plugged in and aware the Damned still is. The band knows its fanbase well and has always been responsive to what the fans want. "The people I guess who were getting affected most by all that recession bollocks were the forty-year-olds who have their mortgages, they're struggling with their families, they may have lost their jobs, so it made sense to put on a kind of a more mature bill."

The band's approach to its live shows pretty much sums up its overall ethos — unpretentious, straightforward, hardworking, and determined to make its fans happy. "We pretty much write out an hour and a half and if it's a fantastic gig and we haven't got a curfew, we'll just keep playing. Some shows that we do for our official Damned messageboard fans in the UK we play like three hours for them. It's just you call them out and if we can remember them we'll play them." The band has a massive back catalog to draw on, which inevitably means that it's impossible to play everyone's favorites (Pinch says that sometimes people come up to the tour bus and complain afterward if their personal favorite isn't included in a show), but the members do their best. Their philosophy seems to be that as long as people are willing to keep booking them and fans are willing to turn out to see them, they're willing to show up and play.

Those high profile covers have exposed a younger generation of fans to the Damned, leading to an oddly charming tendency for parents and kids to sometimes show up to their gigs together. It hasn't all been smooth sailing though — a tour with Rob Zombie in 2002, instigated because Zombie is a huge Damned fan, didn't go so well. "They hated us — they fucking hated us so much. ... There were 5,000 people with their backs turned to us, flipping the bird to us. After the show the bass player was collecting enough quarters that had been thrown at us to buy himself a meal. We had shoes thrown at us, glasses, you name it. It was like back in the old days; it reminded me of the Blues Brothers with the chicken wire. It was horrible." Other tours that you might not expect to work well have gone better. On a tour with Motörhead last year, "They completely understood us, which was a worry going in to it, of course."

It just goes to show that you can never quite tell what the Damned is going to do next, or who it's going to appeal to. Like many bands who're weathering the financial downturn in the music industry well, the band is "self-financed, self-promoted, self-managed — we're a completely independent company." What that means is flexibility — they can do more or less whatever they want, and they've used that freedom to keep making the kind of noise that they care about. Given that some band members are now in their fifties, they won't be around forever, so check them out while you still can. The Damned is a living piece of punk history, and there aren't many bands like it left. ●

Show Details

The Damned headline at Slim's (333 11th St., San Francisco) with Hewhocannotbenamed and the Generators opening, on Sunday, Feb. 14, 8 p.m., $30. SlimsSF.com

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CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

Sound Tribe Sector 9's mystical instrumentals are stories waiting to be told

By [illegible] Ali

Much like his band's music, Jeffree Lerner tends to avoid specifics. As the percussionist of Sound Tribe Sector 9 (STS9), he and the Santa Cruz-via-Georgia group create electronica with a world lens. Fueled by wanderlust, its work is not only instrumental, but also heavily improvised. Each song is malleable. A mood might be identifiable but characters and setting certainly aren't. Everything is ready for change.

In the same freewheeling spirit, Lerner discusses STS9 and its output in vague, open-ended fashion. For example, when asked to nail down the primary factors that have allowed the five-piece to keep its popularity steady over a decade since its inception, he responded, "A lot of it is the writing and arrangement, and dedicating ourselves to getting better on our instruments. Even though we have been doing this for as long as we have, all of us feel there is room to grow on our instruments. Personal experiences in life are reflected in that as well."

Lerner is far more adept at drawing comparisons to better understand STS9's approach. Speaking with the *Miami New Times* last December, he said his outfit's aversion to vocals allowed it to look "for a different reaction, different interpretations, like painting without a caption." Now, analyzing the idea of improv, he uses a simile to emphasize the freedom of revamping established arrangements. "The best way to describe it is [like] having a house. You have the walls and things that aren't going to move, but you can redecorate any way you want." Admitting his enjoyment of comparison, he added with a chuckle, "You've got to use them when there are no lyrics to go from." Working with such expansive architecture, STS9 exists to challenge the unknown. Its creations chase their weirdest whims, frequently in full view of an audience. Listeners, in turn, can use the lack of detail in the gray, spaced-out vastness to map out their own stories and connections.

With its sprawling playing style, STS9 is, not surprisingly, frequently tabbed as a jam band. The group has shown little fondness toward the descriptor, but it does make sense: Improvisation is a major facet of its dynamic. It pulls in shades of funk and psychedelia, and it frequently preserves many shows' soundboard recordings for sale later. On a cultural level, the men behind STS9 are big into social and environmental activism — the sort of thing often associated with the left-leaning set that would dig a jam band.

After years of receiving the tag, Lerner has found a rejuvenated take on it. "I'm not so confused anymore, because I have a different way of looking at it," he said. "You can describe a bluegrass band or Medeski Martin & Wood [or] a vocal band [as a jam band]. It's really not about the music, it's about the fans. It's about the community out there supporting live music."

Sound Tribe Sector 9

STS9 thrives in a live setting, employing massive light shows and a sizable LED screen displaying fluctuating patterns. Working with a myriad of instruments, laptops, and wires, the group attempts to channel crowds in seconds. "The energy is a real give-and-take with our fans," he said. "We have the way we play our songs, but within that is room for expression of the day and environment. [The fans] are influencing us."

Before hitting the stage, the members typically spend an hour talking about where they feel like taking their music that night. Using the average setlist for a week, they repeatedly tweak the songs and revisit the best pieces that emerged before. "We go with a plan but those plans might change," Lerner said. "We treat it like a conversation. If something that changes the subject matter comes up, we go with that."

Ad Explorata, STS9's December release from 1320 Records, also teeter-totters, shuffling between radiance and gloom. "It represents a wider spectrum — a balance between both sides of the story, [from] the laid-back to the edgier tracks," the percussionist said.

Perhaps most compelling about the album is the story attached to its creation. The account published on the group's homepage in October as "The Genesis of *Ad Explorata*" involves decoding numbers heard on shortwave radio transmissions, tracking down and entering a forgotten bunker in Big Sur, and unearthing an aged metal container featuring knickknacks like passports and a military intelligence file about brainwashing. The cryptic insignia on a patch found in the box led them to the existence of a secret organization whose motto was "Ad Explorata: Forward Into the Unexplored."

Show Details
Sound Tribe Sector 9 performs on Saturday, Feb. 13, at the Fox Theater (1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland), 8 p.m. $27.50. 510-452-0438 or TheFoxOakland.com

Posted below the Tomb Raider-style tale are reactions that range from impressed ("one of the coolest and most inspiring ideas behind an album I have ever heard") to incredulous ("do you really expect us to swallow this BS"). Lerner and company still stick to it. "That was our experience and how we wanted to share the album," he said. "I will neither confirm nor deny." Lerner's favorite part of the alleged quest was how it adds "hidden meaning" to STS9's mythos. "It's a breadcrumb trail to have our fans search deeper into the things that mean a lot to us. ... It's up to the individual to take the journey." ●

To share this story, go to: ebx.by/sts9

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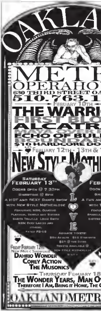

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EAR BUD

LA PEÑA EMBRACES MORE HIP-HOP

Plus, Paramount board member goes on the defense, and bluegrass fest starts.

By Kathleen Wentz

La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley has always held hip-hop events, but thanks to its relatively new development director, **Susie Lundy**, the venue plans to refocus its efforts on drawing in more of the hip-hop community. Lundy, a 34-year-old arts educator, dancer, painter, and muralist who grew up in Fremont, says she's been working on booking and commissioning more hip-hop-oriented artists — from emcees to filmmakers, skaters, and chefs. "It's wanting to open up the space and make it accessible to folks," Lundy said. "Because I'm really a B-girl myself, I really understand that hip-hop isn't really contained. It really is hybrid."

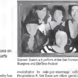
Some upcoming events include a local hip-hop film festival in June and a skater-themed series of films hosted by **K-Dub** in May. On Wednesday, February 10, **Blitz the Ambassador** will perform live hip-hop fused with elements of jazz and reggae. Then on February 21, vegan soul food author **Bryant Terry** and choreographer **Amara Tabor Smith** will curate an evening of performance and food.

Convincing other staff members that La Peña — which celebrates its 39th anniversary this year — should refocus its efforts on hip-hop wasn't so much of an issue for Lundy. Yet getting neighbors on board has been another challenge. "In the past there may have been complaints from the neighbors because of noise or people hanging out on the streets," she said. "But we're trying to do outreach" and educate neighbors on "understanding the culture." As part of that effort, Lundy booked an all-female hip-hop show for March 13. "It stands in the face of what a lot of times older people think about hip-hop — being misogynistic or just wild." **Conscious Daughters**, **Pam the Funkstress**, and Lundy's own crew will be among the performers.

Lundy hopes more young people will see La Peña as a place to call their own. "I encourage people to really take ownership of the space by contacting us about their ideas," she said. "We're trying to cultivate open-communication and part of our mission is really being a community center that is accessible to everyone." To submit ideas for programming or to perform, e-mail her at Susie@lapena.org.

Paramount Board Member Defends Theater

Two weeks ago, we questioned the qualifications of **Paramount Theatre** board member **Lorenzo Hoopes**. The 98-year-old former president of the Mormon Temple became the subject of much criticism lately when he came up for reappointment because he was a major contributor to anti-gay-marriage initiative, Proposition 8. Yet there are other questions as to whether Hoopes — and other board members, for that matter — have sufficiently maximized the theater's capabilities or thoroughly understood the industry in which it operates.


Stairwell Sisters will perform at the San Francisco Bluegrass and Old-Time Festival.

Now fellow Paramount board member **Clinton Killian** is speaking up in defense of the theater's operators in a recent op-ed piece published by the *Oakbook*. Though Killian, an attorney in Oakland, doesn't specifically address the issue of Hoopes' qualifications (except to say that he helped raise funds to restore the Paramount decades ago), he defends the fact that the *Paramount* has never acted as a promoter because of the "huge risks" involved. He also counters the assertion that the theater is an underused asset and says it's "the 23rd-most active performance theater in the country."

SF Bluegrass & Old-Time Fest

The **11th Annual San Francisco Bluegrass and Old Time Festival** starts on Friday, February 12, and runs through Saturday, February 21. Shows will be held in more than forty venues around the Bay Area, and include performances by **Loudon Wainwright III**, **Nashville Bluegrass Band**, **Jackstraw**, **Viper Central**, **Striped Pig**, **Eric and Susie Thompson**, **Jimbo Trout**, and others. The locally based **Stairwell Sisters** kick things off on Friday at the **Freight & Salvage**. Other shows in the East Bay include Loudon Wainwright III at Freight & Salvage and **Susie Glaze & the Hilonesome Band** at **McGrath's Pub** on Saturday, Feb. 13, and the weekly **Taco Jam** at **Baja Taqueria** on Monday, Feb. 15. For a complete lineup, go to SFBluegrass.org/11fest/schedule.php.

Three-Dot Roundup

San Francisco fuzz-doom duo **Black Cobra** released its *Chronomega* album on vinyl last week, featuring a cover of Buzzov•en's "Behaved." ... Oakland's **Clipd Beaks** released *To Realize* on January 26 and plays the **Elbo Room** on March 15. The band describes the album as a "turning point" in its career. ... Motley Crue bassist and famous overdoser **Nikki Sixx** is hosting a syndicated radio show called ***Sixx Sense***, which will air on 98.5FM **KUFX** Mondays through Fridays from 7 p.m. to midnight. ... A reunited **Faith No More** will play two shows at the Warfield Theatre on April 13 and 14. Tickets went on sale last Sunday. ●

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Ear Bud is culled from our music blog, Ear Bud.

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Alice in Chains

Black Gives Way to Blue

Resurrecting Alice in Chains for its first album since the death of frontman Layne Staley, Jerry Cantrell, Mike Inez, and Sean Kinney were in a sensitive situation. Staley was the face of Alice in Chains even though Cantrell co-founded the band with him. In bringing another singer into the fold, the Seattle outfit risked embarrassing itself. Fortunately, Cantrell took the creative reins while the band went with William DuVall of Atlanta outfit Comes With the Fall. Cantrell handled nearly all the vocals and songwriting, making for a batch of new material that doesn't sound as if Alice in Chains has been away for a decade and a half.

The band still traffics in the same nuances you'd expect in its music — Sturm und Drang atmospherics, sludgy rhythms, and leaden riffs — a gloomfest containing a fair share of melody. The band's retains its heaviness within the steady pounding and resolute snarl of "A Looking In View" or the rolling defiance that is "Last of My Kind." Staley's spirit hovers over the proceedings and it's not hard to spot nods to him. Opening song "All Secrets Known" kicks off with the couplets *Hope/A new beginning/Time/Time to start living* as a steady layering of repetitious notes and swirling chords works toward a steady build. The gorgeous title cut, a coda featuring Elton John on piano, delicately mixes crying guitar, acoustic strum, and Reg Dwight.

Far from being a pale replica of its former self, this latest incarnation of Alice in Chains is instead a return to the band's roots. (Virgin)

— *Dave Gil de Rubio*

Alice in Chains plays the Fox Theater (1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) on Feb. 11, 8 p.m. $38.50

Grosse Abfahrt

Vanity

Grosse Abfahrt is based around a core of stellar Bay Area improvisers — Tom Djll, Gino Robair, Tim Perkis, Matt Ingalls, and John Shiurba — who have been working together for decades. The group always features guest musicians, and on its new CD *Vanity*, it's faced with the independently developed style of the French string duo of Matthieu Werchowski and David Chiesa, with Bay Area cellist Theresa Wong helping bridge the gaps of instrumentation and familiarity. The visiting string players are rooted in slightly more conventional techniques than the far-extended and electro-acoustic core group, and reconciling these differences is one of the challenges of the project.

In "Live Free or Die Dolphin" the musicians create transcendental music from a place of total trust. The track opens with tense, *Terminator*-like sci-fi horror music: a driving contrabass pulse underlies sustaining electronic dissonances. As different small groupings of players stand out from the group backdrop, new textures constantly emerge. Soon the music is intensely quiet, with instrumental sounds approaching room ambience. Dropping into sustained quietness like this requires great trust between the collaborating improvisers, with the opportunity to take the lead — and the danger of ruining the music — never closer. It is one of the highest states of improvised music, a state where anything is possible. Here are some of the strongest sounds on the album: a few phrases of something like someone folding laundry and weird breath sounds jabbing out from improperly sounded horns. Executed perfectly, and the music is fantastic. (Emanem)

— *Jacob Felix Heule*

Grosse Abfahrt performs at 21 Grand (416 25th St., Oakland) on Feb. 17, 8 p.m. $15-$20. 21Grand.org

Real Vocal String Quartet

Real Vocal String Quartet

The Real Vocal String Quartet is set on expanding the parameters of classical string music. Group founder violinist and vocalist Irene Sazer was an original member of the Turtle Island String Quartet, the jazzy pioneering newgrass and world fusion band. Sazer and the other members of Real Vocal String Quartet — Alisa Rose, violin; Dina Maccabee, viola; and Jessica Ivry, cello — were all classically trained, but they're intent on playing music that breaks down the parameters of the string quartet.

On Ayub Ogada's "Kothbiro," a song about herding cattle in the rain, the plucked strings of the violins mimic the sound of the *nyatiti*, a Kenyan harp. The dark textures of the viola, the group's four-part harmonies, and Tobias Roberson's percussion add to the mood. "Talking Drum Talking String" does exactly what you'd expect: the women pound the bodies of the violins and pluck the strings to produce a talking drum-like sound, complementing a bluegrassy, Appalachian-influenced melody. "Kitchen Girls" is a folk song played in a manner that suggests heavy rock riffing and mountain fiddling, with Ivry's thumping cello holding down the bass line. Sazer's "Darling" is a beautiful love song, with a simple folklike lyric that's balanced by the group's lush harmonies and emotive string work.

The quartet shows off its vocal work on the aptly named "Chorale," a baroque melody by Sazer that moves from a beautiful string arrangement to a sumptuous interlude of intertwined vocal harmonies. (Flower Note)

— *j. poet*

The Real Vocal String Quartet plays at the Freight & Salvage (2020 Addison St., Berkeley) on Feb. 11, 8 p.m. $18.50-$19.50. TheFreight.org

To share this story, go to: ebx.ly/pc/od3

Dublin

Ease the Pain

Irish American rapper **Dublin** has some serious talent. Not only is he a credible rapper, he's damn funny. Songs like "My Dog Is Smarter Than Me" and "DJ's Drunk" are hilarious masterpieces, tributes to one's own stupidity. With elements of smooth jazz and reggae mixed in, this is a great album. (Jazz Mafia Recordings)

At Cesis (1710 Mission St., San Francisco) on February 16, 9:30 pm. $7

Company Car

The English Eye

Classic indie-pop with a light punk influence is what *The English Eye* is all about. The songs would fit easily into just about any alt rock station's playlist. It would be nice to see something longer from Company Car, but for now this is a good taster. The band isn't hugely original, but definitely shows promise. (self-released)

At Bottom of the Hill (1233 17th St., San Francisco) on February 12, 10 p.m. $10

The Slow Poisoner

Magic Casket

Did the B-52s have a baby? *Magick Casket* starts off with "Rock Lobster"-like weirdness, then transforms into something that sounds like T. Rex. "Wood Full O' Witches" starts off sounding like the theme to *The Munsters*. "Thundering Fists O' the Lord" sounds like a church revival meeting. This album is all over the place stylistically but competently played. (Rocktopus! Records)

At the Stork Club (2330 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) on February 12, 9 p.m. $5

Cast of Thousands

Applied Mythology

Cast of Thousands makes lovely, post-hardcore-influenced indie music. Male and female vocals blend seamlessly, guitar work is pleasantly jangly, bassist Jennifer Yee is excellent — it even manages to integrate a harmonica without it sounding too folksy. There's a dark vibe to *Applied Mythology* that's very appealing. (self-released)

At Bottom of the Hill (1233 17th St., San Francisco) on February 12, 10 p.m. $10

Bay Area bands, show us what you've got. Send CDs to Local Licks c/o the *East Bay Express*.
To share this story, go to: ebx.ly/ncllbs

Valentine's Day Duet Contest
Valentine's Day Feb 14th
$500 and restaurant gift certificates being awarded to the top ten
@ Blakes
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Contest starts at 8pm
For Details or to be in the contest visit: www.[illegible]

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THURSDAY
lady tunes with dj golden grom 10pm
FRIDAY
golden hours with golden grom 5-10pm
berkeley squares present djs [illegible] 10pm
SATURDAY
warm up with music by [illegible] 7-10pm
soul knockout with djs [illegible]
[illegible]
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[illegible] SAN PABLO AVE BERKELEY THEMISSOURILOUNGE.COM

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East Bay 2010 / Directed by Jamie Sharp
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QTPOC Recipes for Love, Sex & Disaster
SAT 13 GARY LAPOW
Great Family Show at 10:30am
SUN. 14 15TH LOVE FEST
Aya de Leon's Alternative Valentine's Day
WED. 17 FOR HAITI
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CONCERTS & CLUBS

ON SALE THIS WEEK

Los Tres: featuring Vicente Fernandez, Joan Sebastian, & Marco Antonio Solis. Tickets go on sale Friday, February 12 at 10 a.m., Sat., April 17, 8 p.m., $58-[illegible] HP Pavilion, 525 W. Santa Clara St., San Jose.

[illegible]: Tickets go on sale Thursday, February 11 at 10 a.m., Wed., March 24, 8 p.m., $35 Fox Theater

The National: Tickets go on sale Thursday, February 11 at 10 a.m., Wed., May 26, 8 p.m., $30 Fox Theater

Orbital: Tickets go on sale Saturday February 13 at 10 a.m., Fri., April 30, 9 p.m., $35-$37 The Warfield

Snoop Dogg: Tickets go on sale Saturday February 13 at 10 a.m., Wed., March 3, 9 p.m., [illegible] The [illegible]

THURSDAY 11

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Country Joe's Music Hall and Open Mic w/ guests, Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 7 p.m., $5-$10 [illegible]

The Jugtown Whites Starry Plough, 9 p.m., free

The Bay Bones Sonny Armando's, 9 p.m., $15

Classical & Opera

Berkeley Opera performing highlights from *Don Giovanni*, Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch, 12:15 p.m., free

Experimental & Avant-Garde

[illegible] String Singles Freight & Salvage, 8 p.m., $18.50-$20.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Jazz Mine swing jazz, Ming Tsin Yandee Restaurant, 6:30-9 p.m., free

Thursday Night Live featuring the [illegible] Trefoiles, 8-11 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

Alien to Mirium Ivy Room, 9 p.m., $10.50

Intangible Animals w/ The [illegible], GroundUpper, Stork Club, 9 p.m., tba

Pollo del Mar w/ [illegible], Forbidden Island, 8 p.m., free

Gentlemen and the [illegible] Studio Music, 8 p.m., free

The Spoonmilies Pat's Irish Sports Bar, 10 p.m., free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Unplugged [illegible] and [illegible] jazz showcase, [illegible] after 11 p.m., Club [illegible], 8 p.m., $15-$20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Wire the Ambassador La Peña Cultural Center, 9 p.m., $8-$10

[illegible] Yoshi's, 8 & 10 p.m., $10-$16

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Johnny [illegible] Boom Boom, & Blues, 9 p.m., $15

Rock & Pop

[illegible] w/ The Family Crest, Sweet Talk Radio, Jesse [illegible], & Matt Stevens, Hotel Utah, 7:30 p.m., $10

[illegible] w/ [illegible], Langhorn [illegible], Bay of Pigs, Cafe du Nord, 9 p.m., $12

The Mallybeaus w/ Rick Pulisi, Hey Mirium [illegible], Mirium of the Hill, 9 p.m., $8

[illegible] Whites w/ [illegible], [illegible], 9 p.m., $8

Gustavo & Sons Poorhouse, 9 p.m., tba

No Captains Amnesia, 9 p.m., $5-$8

Nothing People w/ Moon Duo, Hemlock Tavern, 9 p.m., $6

Wild [illegible] w/ Still Life Still, Magik Dunes, The Independent, 8 p.m., $12-$14

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Andre Valentino w/ The Jasha, Sarcon-E, Teki, & Ronde Bare, Slim's, 9 p.m., $20-$25

Valentine's Day [illegible] with Will Downing Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 p.m., $40

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Ike & Los Mies Mojito, 9:30 p.m., free

Joe [illegible] CD Release Party featuring Chino Mann, DJ [illegible], & Senor Oz, Elbo Room, 9:30 p.m., $8-$9

FRIDAY 12

EAST BAY

All Ages

[illegible] Rudramandir, 8 p.m., $15-$25

Blues, Folk & Country

Guitar Player Magazine Presents An Evening with [illegible] Montgomery Starry Plough, 9 p.m., $8

Shir Gustavo Song of Songs [illegible] [illegible] Community Center of the East Bay, 7:30 p.m., free

Stairwell Sisters w/ Red Molly, Freight & Salvage, 8 p.m., $18.50-$20.50

The Whiskey [illegible] Armando's, 9 p.m., $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Alt Tal Cafe Van Kleef, 9 p.m., tba

Gustavo Jupiter, 9 p.m., free

[illegible] Lucky & [illegible] [illegible], 9 p.m., $13

This Is for Sam Bu Pius 53 Bowie, 8:30 & 10 p.m., $10-$15

Todd Sickafoose & Tiny Resistors Sweetwater, 9 p.m., $19-$25

Valentines Day Valentine with [illegible] Simples Yoshi's, 8 & 10 p.m., $40

[illegible], The [illegible] w/ Con-Cambio, Cafe A Rice, [illegible], 9 p.m., $8

Rock & Pop

Against Twin w/ The [illegible], The Sunset, Stork Club, 9 p.m., tba

A [illegible] Journey from the '70s to Today Shattuck Nightclub, 8 p.m., TBA

Tiger [illegible] w/ Common Eider, King Eider, & [illegible], [illegible] Grand Gallery/Performance Space, 8:30 p.m., tba

Vanessa & the [illegible] w/ Fire After Antonio, Molly Hightone, [illegible] on Telegraph, 8:30 p.m., $10-$12

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] Love [illegible] Valentine featuring [illegible] Wonder, Corey Action, The [illegible], & more, [illegible], 9:30 p.m., $15-$20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Valentines [illegible] Ashkenaz, 8:30 p.m., $5-$10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Benjamin Mirium and the [illegible] w/ Colour, Even Tinier Mountain, 9 p.m., $6-$8

Leftover [illegible] The Independent, 9 p.m., $28.50

[illegible] Boom Boom & Blues, 8 & 10 p.m., [illegible]

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Love Vibes: All That Jazz Women's Building, 8 p.m., $65-[illegible]

Rock & Pop

The [illegible] Leaf w/ [illegible] String Quartet, Sea Wolf, Great American Music Hall, 9 p.m., $15

Alec [illegible] Cafe Du Nord, 9:30 p.m., $10

Valentine Studies w/ American Studies, [illegible], & The Pagan [illegible], [illegible], 9 p.m., $5-$8

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Don't, The Hold Up, The Regency Center, 8 p.m., $21.50-$25

Company Car w/ Cast of Valentines, The Paper Sons, Bottom of the Hill, 10 p.m., $12

Dirk Hamilton The Connecticut Yankee, 10 p.m., $12

East Bay [illegible] w/ Three Hills of Gold, [illegible] Tavern, 8:30 p.m., $7

Matt [illegible] Valentine's & Birthday [illegible] and Special [illegible] featuring [illegible], Greg Anton, Michael Hinton, & more, [illegible], 8:30 p.m., $20

Super [illegible] Saturday! w/ [illegible], 9 p.m., [illegible]

Talented Love w/ Mustache Harbor, [illegible] 330 Club, 9 p.m., $25

[illegible] w/ Josh Means, Swedish American Hall, 7:30 p.m., $22-$28

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] Madrid San Francisco, 8 p.m., $20

De La Soul Yoshi's San Francisco, 10 p.m., $40

Soul Food for Thought/The Soul [illegible] of Liberation featuring music, food, & more, Herbst Theatre, 8 p.m., $10-$40

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Tango No. 9 [illegible] by Ministry, 8:15 p.m., $15-$17

SATURDAY 13

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Love and the [illegible] Jazzschool, 8 p.m., $13

Loudon Wainwright w/ Loudon Wainwright, Alex Cotton, High Wide & Handsome, & The Charlie Poole Project, Freight & Salvage, 8 p.m., $24.50-$26.50

Sugar Mike Cafe [illegible], 7 p.m., tba

Classical & Opera

Miriam Abramowitsch and Miriam [illegible] performing pieces by Schubert, Brahms, & Ravel, Crowden Center for Music in the Community, 7:30 p.m., $12-$15

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra performing *An Elegant Romance*, First Congregational Church, 8 p.m., $30-$75

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

De Orin Jupiter, 9 p.m., free

Friday Frolics Sweetwater, 9 p.m., free

Jazz Quartet Cafe [illegible], 7 p.m., tba

This Is for Jazz [illegible] Pius 53 Bowie, Feb. 13 $11-$20

Valentines Day Weekend with [illegible] Simples Yoshi's, 8 & 10 p.m., $40

Rock & Pop

[illegible] & [illegible] featuring [illegible], [illegible], & [illegible], [illegible] on Telegraph, 8:30 p.m., $12

The LA [illegible] w/ The Neighborhood Bullys, [illegible] & The [illegible], [illegible], Stork Club, 9 p.m., tba

A [illegible] Journey from the '70s to Today Shattuck Nightclub, 8 p.m., TBA

Mystic [illegible] of the [illegible] w/ [illegible], [illegible], Bobby Joe Ebola & the Children MacNuggits, Uptown, 9 p.m., $10

A Night in [illegible] Kent House, Live, 7 p.m., tba

[illegible] Fox Theater, 8 p.m., $27.50

A Valentine's Peace & Love Costume & Dance Party featuring free live entertainment, [illegible] Art House Gallery & Cultural Center, 9 p.m., $12

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] & the [illegible] Cafe Van Kleef.

5 pm, $8

[illegible] Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 8 pm, $10

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

The Gypsy Stringz w/ Kolo Festival Band, Eszterlanc Hungarian Dance Ensemble, Ashkenaz, 8 pm, $12-$15

[illegible] of Tabla Music [illegible] Ashkenaz, 8 pm, $20 [illegible]

[illegible] Reggae Night w/ rotating live bands, [illegible], 8 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] w/ [illegible], Hotel Utah, 8:45 pm, $10

John [illegible] [illegible], 8 pm, $20

[illegible] Theatre [illegible] w/ [illegible] American Music Hall, 9 pm, $14-$16

[illegible] The Independent, 8 pm, $20.50

[illegible] [illegible] folk music w/ [illegible] Café, 10:30 am-12:15 pm, free

SF Bluegrass & Old-Time Festival [illegible] Family [illegible], 7:30 pm, $16-$18

SF Bluegrass and Old-Time Festival [illegible], Whiskey [illegible], The Mighty Ghosts, & Erik Clarricoats, Café Du Nord, 8:30 pm, $12-$15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Love Bites: All That Jazz Women's Building, 8 pm, $15-$20

[illegible] [illegible] 8 pm, $20

A Very Special Valentine's Evening With [illegible] & His Big Band [illegible], 8 pm, $40-$50

Rock & Pop

[illegible] w/ The [illegible], Bad [illegible] [illegible], 10 pm, $8

[illegible] featuring [illegible], 10:30 pm, $10

[illegible] featuring [illegible], [illegible] Fillmore, 6 pm, $35, $100 VIP

[illegible] [illegible] of the Hill, 10 pm, $8

[illegible] w/ [illegible] 330 Club, 9 pm, $20

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Presents, 5 pm, $6

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Kimo's, 9 pm, $5-$8

Ty Segall w/ The [illegible], [illegible], 9:30 pm, $1

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

De La Soul Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 pm, $40

SUNDAY 14

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] & The [illegible] Saint Mark's Catholic [illegible], 3 pm, $15, kids under 12 free

[illegible] & The [illegible] Café Van Kleef, 9 pm, free

The King [illegible] [illegible], 3 pm, $20

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Freight & Salvage, 8 pm, $20.50-$21.50

The [illegible] Irish [illegible] [illegible] to play Irish music w/ [illegible] Plough, 8:15 pm, sliding scale

Classical & Opera

Philharmonia [illegible] [illegible] performing *An Elegant Romance*, First Congregational Church, [illegible] pm, $30-$15

[illegible] Chamber [illegible] performs Haydn's [illegible] in B Major, Op. 11, No. 3 [illegible] Quartet No. 3 [illegible] Op. 41 No. 2, [illegible] Hall, 3 pm, $62

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Jazzschool, 4:30 pm, $15

[illegible] Presents [illegible] [illegible] Restaurant and [illegible], [illegible] pm, $10

Valentine's [illegible] Yoshi's, 1 pm, $40

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

[illegible] Party [illegible]

EAST BAY

[illegible] Gallery/Performance [illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-444-[illegible]

[illegible] on Solano 1[illegible] Solano Ave., Albany, 510-528-[illegible]

[illegible] 924 Gilman St., Berkeley, 510-525-9926

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] St., [illegible], Oakland, 510-444-[illegible]

[illegible] Pub 1[illegible] San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-[illegible]

The Alley 3325 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-444-[illegible]

[illegible] Music [illegible] Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Marina Vista Ave., Martinez, [illegible]

[illegible] Lounge & [illegible] [illegible] Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-5054

[illegible] [illegible], Pleasanton, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] 5[illegible] Bay St., Emeryville

[illegible] 2271 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-444-[illegible]

[illegible] Center for the Arts [illegible] St., Alameda, 510-523-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Walnut Creek, 925-[illegible]

The [illegible] [illegible] St., [illegible], 510-[illegible]

[illegible] on Telegraph 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-[illegible]

[illegible] on Telegraph (upstairs) 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-[illegible]

[illegible] 2[illegible] San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Ave., Livermore, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Walnut Creek, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Franklin St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] College Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Sports [illegible] [illegible] Civic Dr., Walnut Creek, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Alameda Ave., Alameda, [illegible]

415-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Repertory, Oakland, 510-[illegible]

First Congregational [illegible] 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley, 510-848-[illegible]

First Presbyterian [illegible] [illegible] Broadway, Oakland, 510-444-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Ave., [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Rd., [illegible], [illegible]

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**[illegible] UC Berkeley [illegible] Way at College Ave., Berkeley, 510-642-[illegible]

[illegible] Club [illegible] St., Alameda, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Addison St., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] of the East Bay [illegible] Walnut St., [illegible], 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Park St., Alameda, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-444-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Solano Ave., Berkeley

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] Ave., [illegible], 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Emeryville, [illegible]

La [illegible] [illegible] Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

La [illegible] [illegible] Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

Lake [illegible] Methodist [illegible] 3330 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge Theatre [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] Santa Clara Ave., Alameda, 510-[illegible]

Lounge 3411 3411 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland

[illegible] & Lounge [illegible] Way, Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Sports Inn & Grill [illegible] N. Main St., Walnut Creek, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Winery [illegible] Ave., Saratoga, 408-[illegible]

[illegible] 1500 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] St., Oakland, 510-238-[illegible]

[illegible] 630 3rd St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Way, Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] Avenue, Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Theatre 2025 Broadway, Oakland, 510-465-6400

[illegible] [illegible] Lafayette, 925-284-[illegible]

[illegible] Hotel [illegible] Main St., Pleasanton, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] Lighthouse [illegible] Cove, Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] 435 13th St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 925-284-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Clement Ave., Alameda, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] 132 24th St., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Rd., [illegible], 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Down Low 2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Valley Blvd., [illegible], San Ramon

[illegible] Amphitheatre One Amphitheatre Pkwy., Mountain View, 650-[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Lincoln Ave., Alameda, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] Main St., Walnut Creek, 925-[illegible]

St. [illegible]'s Episcopal [illegible] 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

St. John's Presbyterian [illegible] 2727 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-[illegible]

[illegible] Plough [illegible] Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-841-[illegible]

[illegible] 2[illegible] Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge 464 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] Lounge [illegible] Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

[illegible] & Grill [illegible] Mt. Diablo St., Concord, 925-[illegible]

[illegible] Vineyards [illegible] [illegible] Rd., Livermore, 925-456-[illegible]

[illegible] Auditorium UC Berkeley, Berkeley, 510-642-[illegible]

White Horse Inn 6551 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-652-[illegible]

Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland, 510-238-9200

Zellerbach Hall UC Berkeley, Berkeley, 510-642-[illegible]

[illegible] 552 [illegible] Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible]

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Ashkenaz
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WED 2/10 8:00 pm $7	FOLKDANCE **BALKAN FOLKDANCE** 8:00 pm dance lessons
THU 2/11 9:30 pm $15 $12 Students	REGGAE **LLOYD BROWN** **AMHA BARAKA** SELECTORS **BRIXTON HITMAN & HUMBLE LION**
FRI 2/12 9:00 pm $13 $10 [illegible]	EAST COAST SWING/LINDY HOP **STEVE LUCKY & THE RHUMBA BUMS** FEATURING **MISS CARMEN GETIT** 8:00 pm E. Coast Swing dance lesson
SAT 2/13 8:00 pm $15 $12 [illegible]	S.F. TAMBURITZA FESTIVAL **GYPSY STRINGZ** **KOLO FESTIVAL BAND** **ESZTERLANC HUNGARIAN DANCE ENSEMBLE** 8:00 pm [illegible]
SUN 2/14 7:00 pm $6 [illegible] $4 kids	"BOOGY SUNDAYS" KIDS' SERIES FLAMENCO [illegible] STAGE PRESENTS **INTERNATIONAL YOUNG PERFORMERS SHOWCASE**
TUE 2/16 8:00 pm $12	MARDI GRAS DANCE PARTY **CREOLE BELLES** **AUX CAJUNALS** 8:00 pm Cajun & Zydeco dance [illegible] *Part of S.F. Bluegrass & Old-Time Festival*
WED 2/17 8:00 pm $15	SQUARE DANCE **BLACK CROWN STRINGBAND** **PORK PIES** dance calling by **EVIE LADIN** *Part of S.F. Bluegrass & Old-Time Festival*

2/18 MIGHTY [illegible] 2/19 TOM RIGNEY & FLAMBEAU

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SUNDAYS

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CHONK
Eclectic, folky, unbelievably clever anti-folk from Berkeley songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Brian Bauer
[illegible]

2/28/10 2pm
BRIANA LEA PRUETT
Sweet folk blues from Northern California native
myspace.com/brianna[illegible]

3/7/10 2pm
CHRISTINA ANTIPA
Indie folk songwriter from CA's Central Valley, sometimes reminiscent of Chan Marshall or Tara Jane O'Neil
[illegible]

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PICKS

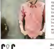
De La Soul

Long Island trio **De La Soul** brought something fresh and new to hip-hop with its 1989 album, *3 Feet High and Rising*. At the time hip-hop really was avant-garde and it was a much darker, quicker genre — replete with odd slang terms, self-effacing lyrics, and chunky dance beats. But De La Soul was still in a class of its own. No one had ever heard of rappers with a sweet tooth for daisies and pastel colors. They had stage names: "Trugoy" (an anagram of "yogurt," while "Posdnuos" was "sound sop" spelled in reverse. P.A. Pasemaster Mase was, well, highly alliterative. To many rap listeners, they seemed like hippies. (In the track "Me, Myself, and I," Posdnuos tried to deflect that stereotype: *No they're not, that's pure plug bull*.) Despite such misunderstandings, De La Soul had enormous staying power. Twenty three years and ten albums since the group's genesis, De La Soul has matured along with its fanbase. Last year the group teamed up with Nike to release a single-track "work out music" record called *Are You In?* This year it's entered the jazz club circuit. De La Soul performs at **San Francisco Yoshi's** (1330 Fillmore St.) on Friday, Feb. 12 (10:30 p.m.) and Saturday, Feb. 13 (8 & 10 p.m.). $40. Yoshis.com — *Rachel Swan*

Leftover Salmon.

Justin Townes Earle

As the son of a well-respected and highly outspoken renaissance man who also happens to be a cornerstone of American music, it would be easy for **Justin Townes Earle** to reject winning the gene-pool lottery. But much to the credit of Steve's son, the younger Earle has not fully embraced his legacy, but dealt with his own substance-abuse problems and is already a few years into carving out a neat musical niche of his own. Still riding the accolades that greeted last year's sophomore outing, *Midnight at the Movies*, Earle has been having fun on the road, sharing his fusion of old-time mountain music and rockabilly rock that's manifested itself in endearing covers of the Replacements' "Can't Hardly Wait." The recently engaged noted clotheshorse along with up-and-comer Joe Pug will be bringing the twang to the **Great American Music Hall** (859 O'Farrell St., San Francisco), on Saturday, Feb. 13, 9 p.m., $14-$16. MusicHallSF.com — *Dave Gil de Rubio*



Leftover Salmon

Leftover Salmon is one of the nation's premier jam bands, a six-man combo that blends the best American bluegrass with its own jazz brand of improvisation. After humble beginnings as a Cajun-flavored bluegrass band, the Salmons quickly evolved their own hard-to-define sound by mixing Cajun, zydeco, bluegrass, funk, Southern rock, Latin music, country, singer/songwriter, and reggae into a free-flowing, often improvised presentation that has made them one of the most unique and surprising bands in the land. The Salmons celebrated their 20th year on the road last year and they continue to win fans with an energetic show that stays rooted in their love of bluegrass even as they trip off to explore outer and inner space. Leftover Salmon plays Friday, Feb. 12, and Saturday, Feb. 13, **at the Independent** (628 Divisadero St., San Francisco), 9 p.m., $26.50. APEConcerts.com — *J. Poet*

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra

Our superb **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra** wins my heart with its all-Brahms Valentine-themed program, *An Elegant Romance*. The star soloist, violinist Viktoria Mullova, moved back in time, as it were, from classical fiddling to baroque practice. Conducted by Nicholas McGegan, the concert presents Brahms' great *Violin Concerto* and *Serenade No. 1*, both in D major. For a pre-Valentine treat, don't miss soprano Jessica Rivera with the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra on Thursday night. At the **First Congregational Church** (2345 Channing Way, Berkeley) on Saturday, Feb. 13, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 14, at 7:30 p.m. $25-$75, student rush $10. 415-392-4400 or Philharmonia.org — *Jason Victor Serinus*

C&C Ballroom, 7 pm, $20

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Quinn DeVeaux and the Blue Beat Review Amnesia, 9 pm, $7-$10
Solvida Plough and Stars, 9 pm, free

Classical & Opera

Sharman Reese on piano for Sunday champagne brunch. Top of the Mark, 10 am-2 pm, $59 for brunch plus gratuity and tax

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Chicago Underground Duo w/ Pit Er Pat. Cafe du Nord, 8 pm, $12-$15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Black Market Jazz Orchestra Valentine's Day Dinner & Dancing. Top of the Mark, 7:30 pm, $148
Lavay Smith & Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers Biscuits & Blues, 8 & 10 pm, $20
A Very Special Valentine's Evening with Vocalist Bobby Caldwell & His Big Band [illegible], 7 pm, $40-$50

Rock & Pop

Champions of Melancholy w/ The Friendly Skies, The Autumn Never Miss, El Rio, 7 pm, $[illegible]
The Donnas w/ [illegible], The Corrupters, Slim's, 8 pm, $20
The Entrance Band w/ Sic Alps, Lights, The Independent, 8 pm, $13-$15
Girls w/ Magic Kids, The Smith Westerns, & Hunx and the Punkettes, Great American Music Hall, 8:30 pm, $16
Valentine's Party/Amnesia with the Ikonas Project featuring The Ikonas Project, El Rio, 4 pm, $5-$10
Sweethearts For Sama w/ David & Tobey [illegible], Bimbo's 365 Club, 7:30 pm, $75

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Martin Luther w/ Fritz the Ambassador Cleo Roots, 9 pm, $8
Valentine's Day with Leela James Yoshi's San Francisco, 7 & 9 pm, $30

MONDAY 15

EAST BAY

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Uptown Hubba Hubba live burlesque w/ Hubba Hubba Revue, Uptown, 9 pm, $5

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Earthquake Relief Jamsess for Haiti featuring Kalbore Keyol, Naomi Stauffer, &

C&C

Any Sartora Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $20

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

W.C. Clark Boscalo & Shem, 7:30 & 9:30 pm, $20

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Stacey Kent [illegible] Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 pm, $14

Rock & Pop

BOC Hemlock w/ [illegible] Cafe du Nord, 8 pm, $10

Mission A Night in Hollywood [illegible] Mission of the Hill, 9 pm, $8

[illegible] The Regency Center, 8 pm, $20-$22

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Bimbo's, 9 pm, $5-$8

TUESDAY 16

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] w/ Aux Capitals, Hemlock 4:30 pm, $12

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Bruce Wise Caffe Trieste, 7 pm, free

Bay Bass Express w/ [illegible] Allan Bailey, Sixth Club, 9 pm, free

Julian & Stone Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden, 7 pm, free

Kids

Abbey and The Pyjamamas La Peña Cultural Center, 10:30 am, $5 adults; $4 kids

Rock & Pop

Meshell Ndegeocello Presents: The Best of Bravo & [illegible] Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $24

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] w/ Marianne Blues, [illegible] and the Moaners, Hotel Utah, 8 pm, $8

Matt Nicas w/ Jason Sanna, Caitlin Crosby, Mission of the Hill, 9 pm, $10-$12

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Dirty Dozen Brass Band w/ Zigaboo Modeliste & the New Aahkestra, The Independent, 8 pm, $22

Trio Da Paz Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 pm, $18

Rock & Pop

[illegible] w/ [illegible], Hemlock The Knockout, 9:30 pm, free

Floating Mirrors w/ The Mission Hoss, El Rio, 4 pm, free

Marissa McHarry w/ Jenny Owen Youngs, Great American Music Hall, 8 pm, $19

Mason City Soundtrack w/ [illegible], The Providence & the Sudden, The Regency Center, 6:30 pm, $20-$22

Oceanography w/ The Pentacles, Mumble Mumble, Hemlock Tavern, 9 pm, $6

Sarah Anthon of K's Choice Cafe Du Nord, 8 pm, $15

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Mission, 9 pm, $5-$8

Umphrey's McGee w/ [illegible], The Fillmore, 8 pm, $35

WEDNESDAY 17

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Stringband w/ The Park Pos, Evie Ladin, Ashkenaz, 8 pm

Harland Brown Freight & Salvage, 8 pm, $18.50-$19.50

The Michael [illegible] Mission Rock, 8 pm, [illegible] the Whiskey Amends Ashkenaz Pub, 9 pm, free

Experimental & Avant Garde

[illegible] 21 Grand, 8 pm, tba

Rock & Pop

Meshell Ndegeocello Presents: The Best of Bravo & [illegible] Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $24

SAN FRANCISCO

Gospel & Vocal

King's Singers Herbst Theatre, 8 pm, $32-$47

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Trio Da Paz Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 pm, $18

Rock & Pop

Danger w/ [illegible] Hemlock Professionals, El Rio, 8 pm, $8

[illegible] w/ [illegible], Bimbo's, 8 pm, $5-$8

[illegible] & Co Hemlock w/ [illegible], Mission Thunderbolt, 4 Mountain, Hemlock Tavern, 8 pm, $8

[illegible] w/ Big Blue Whale, [illegible] Room, 9 pm, $8

Styx The Warfield, 8 pm, $42.50-$65

Theory of a Deadman w/ [illegible] & Taking Dawn, The Regency Center, 7 pm, $22-$25

[illegible] w/ [illegible], Jenkins, & [illegible] Room, 9 pm, $5

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Lounge: Globalistic local world fusion showcase Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 pm, $6

Submissions for music listings should be e-mailed to Clubs@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Clubs Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland CA 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to the event date.

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Bottom of the Hill 1233 17th St., 415-621-4455
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[illegible] 285 9th St. 415-[illegible]
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[illegible] 375 11th St. 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 2400 3rd St., 415-[illegible]
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El Rio 3158 Mission St. 415-[illegible]
Elbo Room 647 Valencia St., 415-552-7788
[illegible] Lounge 1078 Geary St., 415-[illegible]
The [illegible] 419 5th St., 415-[illegible]
The Fillmore 1805 Geary Blvd. 415-346-6000
[illegible] 520 4th St., 415-[illegible]
The [illegible] Ballroom 1300 Van Ness Ave. 415-673-5716
Great American Music Hall 859 O'Farrell St. 415-885-0750
Hemlock Tavern 1131 Polk St., 415-923-0923
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Hotel Utah 500 4th St. 415-546-6300
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Ireland's 32 Bar & Grill 3920 Geary Blvd. 415-386-6173
Jazz at Pearl's 256 Columbus Ave., 415-291-8255
Johnny Foley's Irish House 243 O'Farrell St., 415-954-0777
The Knockout 3223 Mission St. 415-550-6994
[illegible] Lounge 3110 Mission St., 415-[illegible]
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[illegible] 1630 Powell St., 415-[illegible]
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[illegible] Lounge 628 20th St. 415-[illegible]
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[illegible] 209 9th St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible]/Mission Gallery 2183 Mission St. 415-[illegible]
Supperclub 657 Harrison St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 561 Geary St. 415-[illegible]
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Thee Parkside 1600 17th St., 415-[illegible]
Top of the Mark 1 Nob Hill, 999 California St. 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 601 [illegible] St. 415-[illegible]
[illegible] Lounge 443 Broadway St. 415-[illegible]
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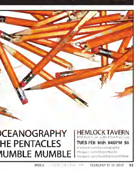

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DJ & DANCE

THURSDAY 11

EAST BAY

Block Wham spinning Pikas & Sweethood, [illegible], garage rock, & indie. Uptown, 9 pm, free

Club Stylistics w/ Djs spinning black, Latin, & hip-hop. Bench and Bar, 9 pm, Djs

Jouvay Thursdays featuring Djs spinning reggae & world [illegible]. Air Bar & Lounge, 10 pm, free

DJ Block Jupiter, 9 pm, Djs

DJ Jerry Walk spinning soul, funk, hip-hop, R&B & more. Easy Lounge, 10 pm, free

DJ Trick spinning lounge. Last Paradise Lounge, 9 pm-2 pm, Djs

Ploodvibes [illegible] dance floor spins jazz & R&B. Kingman's Ivy Block, 9 pm, Djs

UniThursdays student night w/ DJ Jaye 1 spinning mashups, electro, hip-hop, & top 40. Waves on Broadcast, 10 pm, TBA

No Joh w/ DJs Fine China & Sam Posts, Mission Lounge, 10 pm, Djs

Jouvay [illegible] & host MC Sound spin ethnic hip-hop, reggae, & soul. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 pm, Djs

Tasty Ladies' Night w/ DJ Vis Jouvay spinning hip-hop & R&B. Club 21, 9 pm, $12-$15

SAN FRANCISCO

Lifeblood: Get Ugly Rainbow Stop, 10 pm, $5-10

College Night DJs Moore Djs. Mod Lounge, with hip-hop, Reply, R&B, & more. The Cellar, 10 pm, free

Play Anything DJs spinning pop, rock, Djs hip-hop all night. 16th, Free

Solid Attraction spinning DJ Freddy Hole, guests. Fifth Six, 9 pm, $5

FRIDAY 12

EAST BAY

Back to the Friday DJ Paradise spins music from the '80s, Kitty's, & pm, free

Listening w/ DJ Ruby DJ Ryan spinning the hottest music in the Bay Area. White Horse, 9 pm, $5

Friday Night Jouvay Party w/ DJ Sweet-Ragz, Mama Africa Sound, & guests spinning reggae, R&B, & calypso. Block Fingers, & pm, free

Sound Sound Party with DJ Rhythmystic Rhyterne Cultural Works, 7:30 pm, $10

Latin Explosion DJ Jorge Elblock spins cumbia, salsa, merengue, banda, Spanish pop, & block. Bench Bar, Djs 9 pm, $0-$15

Mighty Ina DJs Rodius-T, Ina Bake, & Smoke-One spin reggae, dancehall, & hip-hop. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 10 pm, $8

Old Sound hip-hop, and funk. Radio, 9 pm, free

Solarday DJ Joe Quito spins funk, Latin, & dub. Easy Lounge, 10 pm, Djs

Blob-Blast Hawai Freda Balds '80s pop night. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

Tenfly w/ DJ Jarell Phoyes spinning northern soul, oldies, '60s, block, punk, new wave, & rock 'n' roll, Ruby Block, 10 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

Heavy Saturday As Smoothoo Club Sound for Bay Area Coalition for Our Reproductive Rights, DJ Rio, 9 pm, $5

Paul Van Dyk w/ DJ Taj, 1015 Saturday, 10 pm, $35-$60

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition + Love on Wheels Rickshaw Stop, 7 pm, $5-$10

The Smoothoo spinning **Valentines Party** featuring Bus Kang, Alfrich, & Axel C. Club Six, 9 pm, $8

Smoothoo SF Milk, 9 pm, $5

Trash Tux Night spinning DJs Vinnie Fepsco & Cowie, Fifth Block, 10 pm, $5

SATURDAY 13

EAST BAY

AD Productions & Handstyle Djs spinning R&B & hip-hop, Foxes, 10 pm, free

The Block Yard hosted by Sean Kennedy, Mimos Music, 2 pm, Djs

Club Maxwell's DJs Jerry Walk & Soul Profess spin R&B, soul, funk, reggae, & hip-hop, Maxwell's Lounge, 9 pm, $20

Pinky-Dinky DJ Irene Djs guests spin hip-hop, R&B, mash-ups, Djs rock, College Lane, 9 pm, free

Superstar Saturday Night w/ DJ e-B, White Horse Bar, & pm, $5

La Wild Lane Latino cowboy night w/ Djs spinning salsa, cumbia, & banda, plus hot go-go vaqueros, Club 21, 9 pm, $6-$15

Mac Agen & Crim w/ Djs Mac Kane Djs Farmer's Market, cocktails of [illegible]. Easy Lounge, 10 pm, Djs

Pop History 101 DJs spin pop Djs from the Beatles to Michael Jackson, Ruby Block, 10 pm-2 am, free

Sound Breaker DJ Mak Jouvay spins bedroom block, Kingman's Ivy Block, & pm, Djs

Sound Sound DJs Sound & Sound spin old-school hip-hop, funky soul, classics, club bangers, & more. Radio, 10 pm-2 pm, Djs

Vienna w/ DJ Fluid Cut spinning hip-hop, R&B, classics, Lounge, 9-12 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

BADHS Saturday Sessions featuring Djs Method One. Mint Now. 5th, Club Six, 9 pm, $5-$10

Oforoff (Sound Djs AV B by Club Moods and Club Moods) hosted by Sam Mould, Slim's, 10 pm, $15

Cockblock queer dance party w/ DJ Nuo and friends spinning '50s, '60s, hip-hop, bottom, & soul, Rickshaw Stop, 10 pm, $4

Fatal Attraction spinning hip-hop, Djs spinning Dancehall, Porn, Cetric, Inyplry, Block Funkyclub, & World Rom, Club 5k, 9 pm, $5-$10

Paradise Lover's Block featuring vocalsoul of The Soulsmith Crew, plus Djs Gorient Block, Beat Electric, Mezzanine, 9 pm, $6

SUNDAY 14

EAST BAY

Sound Party featuring Djs Sound Miguel, Mike Mase, Crank Club, & pm, Djs

DJs Block & Tenth spin R&B, old-school, Kitty's, 1 pm, Djs

Mojo w/ DJ Mjacoil spinning soul, funk, & Afrocentric old-school, Somar Bar & Lounge, 8 pm, free

Frauline Club 21, 10:30 pm, Djs

The Soul-Full Slow DJ Adell Drib & guests spin soulful classics, Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 8 pm, Djs

SAN FRANCISCO

Dub Mission w/ DJ Sep, Maestro, the Eventis, & guests, spinning dub, roots, & Rasshore classics, Elbo Room, 9 pm, $6

MONDAY 15

EAST BAY

The 3-Day Weekender w/ Djs Exodus & Maxene Slam spinning hip-hop and soul, classics, Luka's Taproom & Lounge, & pm, free

Mo Mondays DJs Ruddy & Sog spin reggae & dancehall, Kitty's, & pm, free

Mystery Night guest Djs spin hip-hop, new wave, & electro, Ruby Block, 10 pm-2 am, free

Music Hang Out? w/ DJ K-Tol spinning rock and roll, soft hits, oldies, & soul, classics, Lounge, 10 pm, Djs

SAN FRANCISCO

Block Club w/ DJs spinning New Jouvay R&B & '60s soul, Rake Cocktails, 9:30 pm, free

TUESDAY 16

EAST BAY

DJ classic Block Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

DJ Wady spinning punk, Last Paradise Lounge, 9 pm-2 am, free

Sound Science DJ Mark Jouvay spins bedroom block, Kingman's Ivy Block, & pm, free

Stay Punk! DJs Goddess spins spins punk, & metal classics, Lounge, 10 pm, free

Music Hang Out DJs spin rock, soft hits, oldies, & soul, Ruby Block, 10 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

Da Beatless hip-hop open-mic party, Club Six, 9 pm, $5

Swing spins DJ Bo, 7 pm, $5

WEDNESDAY 17

EAST BAY

80s Night with Ms. Dee-Lo Mr. DeLo spins songs from the '80s, plus drink specials by Cary, Easy Lounge, 9 pm, Djs

The Ranchero Latin cowboy night w/ host Velero, Bench and Bar, & pm, $8-$15

Floodvibes & Floor spins soulful guests Sept. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

Mo Wednesdays DJ Sog & guests spin reggae & dancehall, Kingman's Ivy Radio, 10 pm, free

Prince I's Goddess Presents Sloth Club, 9 pm, free

Sound Punk spins new wave, & classic rock w/ DJ Isaac Block Money, Ruby Block, 10 pm-2 pm, Djs

PICK

Eats Tapes

Raising money for Haiti didn't end with George Clooney & Co.'s tele telethon. Get your adventurous feet and nuts-filled jams at the **Elbo Room** (647 Valencia St., San Francisco) on Wednesday, Feb. 10 for the Haiti Relief Benefit with **Eats Tapes**. The highly esteemed SF husband-and-wife duo specializes in noisy club bangers all falling apart and spinning like they got left out in the rain. Hardware sequencers, synths, modified drum machines, cassette players, and a mini Nintendo make songs like "Face Shoulder" and "Hard Reset" sound just like their names. There's melody in there, but it's become super-hot, melodic plasma, diffuse and pulsing in a cauldron of beats. Marijke Jorritsma and Gregory Zifcak hold down the night with TITS, Hound Sound, and DJs CLAWS, Kit Clayton, and Sutekh. 9 p.m., sliding scale. Elbo.com — *David Downs*

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PENETRATION BY OSCAR STATUETTE

If you can think of it, it's been done.

By Dan Savage

A few years before my wife and I met, she made porn with her boyfriend at the time. He intended to start a pay-per-view web site but never launched it. I was a bit upset when she told me, but then I remembered I enjoy porn and the idea of seeing the hottest woman I've ever met doing porn might be really enjoyable, even though I wouldn't want her sleeping with anyone else now. I realize that to get these tapes I'd have to contact the ex and that that might be a bad idea. What do you think?

Torn Over Porn

Um... what does she think? The wife? Have you asked her? Does she want you to see the porn she made with her ex? Does she want to have any contact — even if you handle the negotiations — with her ex?

If she's cool with it and thinks the ex will be cool with it, by all means ask for the tapes. But hold on to my e-mail address just in case her ex is bigger than you, appears better in bed, clearly provided your girlfriend with more shattering orgasms, etc., and you have a careful-what-you-wish-for meltdown and need someone to talk you off the ledge.

I see women prostitutes. Twice in the last five years, the women I was seeing turned out to be a post-op transsexual. They were both nice people, and I wish them well. But I prefer nature's own originals. Some TSs disclose, some don't. Some wind up getting outed on bulletin boards and trashed. I'm not sure it limits their income. What are the rules?

Prefers Really Original Sex

There are no rules in an illegal and unregulated marketplace, although I'm not sure how "truth in packaging" provisions could be enforced if prostitution were legal and regulated. So caveat emptor, boys, and try to mix a little empathy in with your empt-ying. Many TS sex workers are engaged in what social workers call "survival prostitution" — they're marginalized, they don't have familial or societal support, and they're selling sex to keep roofs over their heads — so they're not duping you for sluts and giggles. And there are worse things than sticking your dick in a woman who was born into a man's body, PROS. Did you catch Charlize Theron's performance in *Monster*?

I have been in a non-monogamous marriage for several years. We've had a lot of fun. My only gripe is that she is allowed solo adventures and I am not. When I protest, she says that she would rather stop having solo experiences than allow me to as well. This is little comfort, as I enjoy her having her own experiences. My wife is a lovely woman, and I don't want to risk any damage to my marriage or family life. But it is clear to me that I require a little safe exploration on my own every once in a while. What's a boy to do?

Equal Rights In Coitus

Hearing about the wife's solo adventures gives you a boner, while the prospect of your solo adventures has the opposite effect on the wife. So while you rightly perceive her solo adventuring as unfair, there's something in those solo adventures for you, i.e., lots of boy boners, while there's nothing in your proposed solo adventures for her, i.e., no girl-boners.

Now, life isn't fair, and in an open relationship, life's unfairness can manifest itself in one partner agreeing to less freedom in order to accommodate the other's insecurities, irrationalities, anxieties, etc. If the unfairness of it all is unacceptable to you, accept your wife's offer to terminate her solo adventures. Hopefully she'll miss them as much as you will, and in short order she'll agree to your having solo adventures in order to start having her own again.

I'm a longtime fan of your column and agree with you 99 percent of the time. Alas, I think I'm one of those folks today. Your advice to Horny Homo two weeks ago was messed up. While I agree that careful wording is needed when suggesting a threesome for the first time, a closeted bi guy pretending to go into a MMF situation solely for his girlfriend's pleasure is a recipe for disaster. As a bisexual woman, I find it pathetic that this guy can't suck it up and tell his girlfriend that he's interested in having sex with men. As you've said to other people in similar situations, he's better off telling his girlfriend the truth and seeing if she's into threesomes or polyamory or what have you. Maybe she's completely GGG for the whole thing — or maybe she'd rather not be used by two men looking to scratch an itch.

Flippant Answer Isn't Legit

They can't all be gems, FAIL, and that response sucked balls. Consider it withdrawn. Yes to honesty, yes to the dude telling his girlfriend he's bi, and yes to angry readers calling me on my fails, FAIL. My response was intended to be tongue-in-cheek, but it was head-in-ass.

So the Oscar nominations just came out. The same question plagues me every year: How many people do you think have been fucked with an Oscar? I mean, it's shaped just right and so associated with power, fantasy, etc., that it's just gotta happen, and I'm betting pretty often. Have you heard any news along those lines? Do you think I'm off-base?

Hoping Every Lovely Little Oscar Gets Oiled
Really Cool Looking Orgasms Up Starbutts

Okay, HELLOGORGEOUS, your letter arrived on the day I had the distinct pleasure/honor of hanging out with a couple of people who just so happen to have four — four! — Oscars on a shelf in their offices. Spooky! They laughed when I showed them your letter. Not because they had fucked themselves with their Oscars, but because the first thing they observed about their Oscars was that they were indeed "shaped just right." (I thought the shoulders were a bit wide, personally.)

I didn't press them on whether they had confirmed their suspicions, but rest assured: if it can be stuffed in someone's ass and/or twat, however inadvisable said stuffing might be, someone somewhere has shoved the thing into an ass and/or twat.

Find my podcast at TheStranger.com/savage
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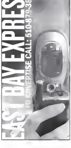

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